REMEMBER TO SUPPORT THE MANGAKA,
BUY YOUR COPY TODAY!!
DO NOT SHARE OUTSIDE OF IRC.

# Gacha Gacha

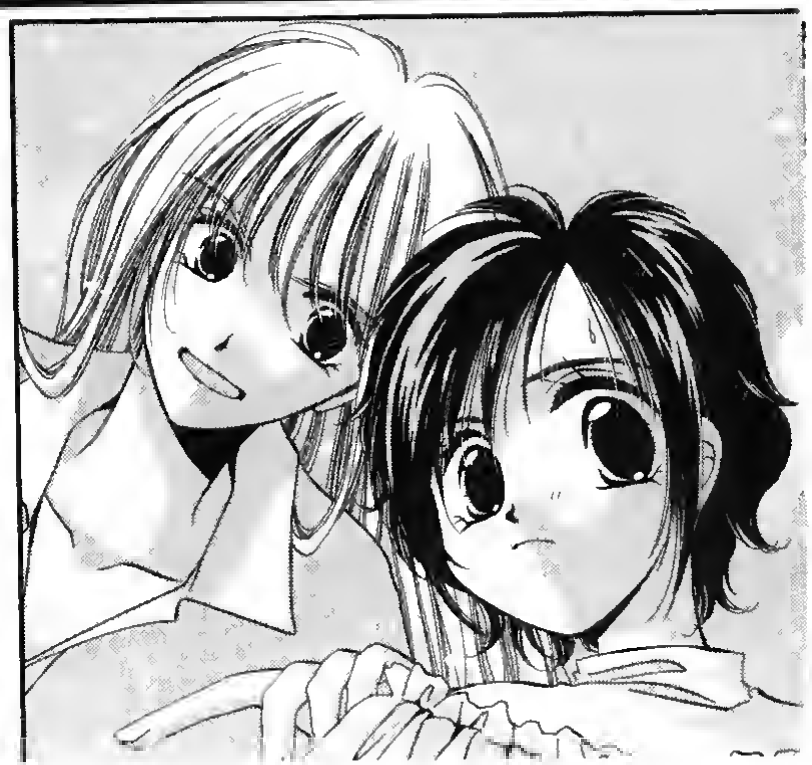
2

BOY TOYS

Yutaka Tachibana

TOKYOPOP

# Gatcha Gacha



Yutaka Tachibana
Gatcha Gacha
TOKYOPOP

OH, MY GOD! THAT POOR GIRL...!
THAT GUY'S A MENACE.
IF THAT'S HER BOYFRIEND, I'LL--
HOLY CRAP! HE'S BEATING HER HARD.
THOSE KICKS ARE BRUTAL!
THAT DUDE TOTALLY FREAKED OUT ON HER.
SHUT UP! THIS IS YOUR FAULT!
OW!
KENJI! STOP IT!
Aah,
THEY WERE ARGUING, AND THEN ALL OF A SUDDEN, HE--

This time, instead of a specific movie recommendation, I'm just going to recommend movies in general. There are all sorts of them out there, in theaters and on TV and stuff. You should go watch some. I don't have as much time to watch them as I used to. It's sad.

The best actor to dub Ed Harris into Japanese has to be Masane Tsukayama. His voice is so wonderful, it makes me melt!

So I've got some weird hobbies I don't care

ASSHOLE!
.....
IT'S THE DAY OF THE ANNUAL FIREWORKS CELEBRATION.
"H"...
CRACK
I CAN'T SEE ANYONE MINDING...
...IF I DISPOSE OF HIM PROPERLY!
And
(Huh?)
damn mit
kill you
AGK!
THIS GUY'S A CREEP, YURI. HE'S A TOTAL SHITHEAD.
SOME JERK'S ALWAYS GOTTA MESS IT UP.
KA.. KAGURA-ZAKA-SAN...
DON'T OVERDO IT, OKAY?
...
WE JUST WANTED TO SEE THE EXCITE-MENT.

WHAAA--?
HOW ABOUT A TOUGHER GIRL?
SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD IDEA!
...HUH?
--UNG!
TRY HITTING ME BACK, BIG SHOT!
... WITHOUT ANY RETALIA-TION...
GIRLS THINK THEY CAN JUST HIT A GUY...
OWWWWW...

JUST DON'T GET ON HER BAD SIDE.
Yup...deep down, Motoko's really sweet.
...THERE'S NO DENYING SHE'S TOTALLY HOT.
BUT...
C'mon! Fight back!
...IT WOULD BE NICE IF...
...SHE LEARNED A LITTLE SELF-CONTROL!
TIME TO FINISH YOU OFF.
HOLD IT! WHOA!
I THINK SHE'S BEAUTIFUL.
YEAH, AND...

YOUR BARK'S WORSE THAN YOUR BITE, ISN'T IT, GRAPHEAD?!
WELL?!
OW! I'M SORR--OW! STOP!
WHEN MOTOKO KAGURAZAKA GOES BALLISTIC, THE NASTIEST THUG WILL SCREAM LIKE A LITTLE GIRL.
She always goes too far!
She did tie me up once
WHEN I FIRST MET MOTOKO, I THOUGHT SHE WAS WEIRD.
I WAS RIGHT, SHE IS WEIRD, BUT STILL...
REST A SECOND...
Are you okay?
There's no stopping her now
CHECK IT OUT, IT'S MOTOKO KAGURAZAKA!
SHE'S AS SCARY AS THEY SAY!
I HEAR SHE'S SUPER MEAN.
THE SCOURGE OF MEIRIN HIGH! ITS BEAUTY AND ITS BEAST!
AAAAAAH!
TRUE, BUT SHE ACTUALLY SAVED ME ONCE BEFORE, TOO.
FOR HOW TOUGH SHE IS, SHE'S GOT A GOOD HEART.

THAT WAS CLOSE.
OH ...!

NO--
STOP !
QUIT IT, KAGURA-ZAKA-SAN!
IF SHE DOESN'T STOP, SHE'LL KILL HIM!
I'LL SQUASH YOU, TURD!
WHAT THE --?
HE'S HAD ALL HE CAN TAKE!
YEEP!
HUH?

SOMEHOW, I KNOW YABE-SENPAI IS DIFFERENT THAN ALL OF THEM.
He doesn't gamble, do drugs, or get in fights for no reason. He's seven nice!
In other words, he's normal.
What? Me, too?
Well he might play Pachinko. I don't know.
She doesn't know he plays mah jong.
I'VE HAD-- AND BEEN DUMPED BY-- 11 BOYFRIENDS SO FAR.
You need to chill Motoko!
YOU SHOULDN'T JUMP IN THE MIDDLE OF A FIGHT LIKE THAT, YURI. YOU'LL GET YOURSELF HURT.
YES, SENPAI.
WHEN IT COMES TO MEN, I'M THE UNLUCKIEST GIRL EVER.
I WILL MAKE HIM MINE.
HE IS THE MAN OF MY DREAMS!
WHATEVER, YABE. THANKS, I GUESS.
THAT YURI'S THE STRANGEST GIRL I'VE EVER MET...

Y-YABE-SENPAI!
THANK GOODNESS...
ALMOST GOT THAT PRETTY FACE OF YOURS REARRANGED THERE...
...YURI.
He looks so cool up close!
THE MAN OF MY DREAMS!
THANK YOU SO MUCH!
AH!
I WAS JUST WALKING BY WHEN I HEARD SOMEBODY SAY SOME GUY WAS GETTING HIS BUTT KICKED BY A CRAZY CHICK.
I KNEW RIGHT AWAY THAT IT WAS PROBABLY MOTOKO, SO I DECIDED TO CHECK IT OUT.
Kenji are you okay?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, YABE?
I NEVER EXPECTED TO MEET HIM HERE OF ALL PLACES.
YOU SURE YOU DIDN'T GET HIT IN THE HEAD OR NOTHING, YURI?
YOU'RE MY ABSOLUTE HERO!
Do whatever you want to me. Please!
He blocked my kick like it was nothing.
YOU'VE COME TO MY RESCUE TWICE NOW!

GAK
PICK ON SOMEONE YOUR OWN SIZE, JACK-ASS!
WUSSY!
.....
Ouww! Why do you keep hitting me?
Because you're stupid, that's why!
WHAM
I won't do it again!
YEAH, I DON'T KNOW ANYONE LIKE THAT! HEE!
POW
KRAK
BAFF
WHAT A WICKED TEMPER.
SMAK
I'm sorry!
I--
YOU WANNA SEE THE FIREWORKS?
THAT SOUNDS ALL RIGHT...

I'D HAVE TAKEN YURI'S HEAD OFF IF YOU HADN'T STOPPED ME.
KAGURAZAKA-SAN?
!?
Kenji!
Please be okay.
sniff
hic
SO, WHAT GOT YOU RILED UP THIS TIME?
KYA!
Quit bug-ging me!
Well?
ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL, I GUESS.
YOU'RE SCARILY POLITE TODAY.
I'm not mad anymore, okay?
I am so sorry.
BOKU!

OOH, NICE. I LIKE BOYS WHO'RE TALL
HE'S PRETTY HOT.
Check those legs
LOOK
YOU KNOW WHO THAT IS? THE STUDENT COUNCIL PRESIDENT OF MEIRIN HIGH!
HE'S A FIRST-CLASS STUDENT, GOOD AT BOTH SPORTS AND ACADEMICS IT'S WHY HE'S SO POPULAR WITH EVERYONE
OO SHUT UP!
I'm not as popular as you think
...WELL, EXCEPT GIRLS, BECAUSE HE HATES THEM.
NO WAY!
...SOME FREAKY GIRL HAS EVEN STARTED STALKING HIM.
I HEARD
Really?
O-OF COURSE!
YOU CAN TOTALLY COME WITH US!
WOO HOO!
WHATTAYA MEAN? DON'T I GET A SAY IN THIS?
The more the merrier!
Yeah, what she said
Huh?!

I'M SO HAPPY!
What a couple of morons.
UM, YURI?
HE SAYS THAT TO ALL THE GIRLS.
TEE-HEE! SAY THAT AGAIN, YABE-SENPAI.
YOU'RE CUTE. YOU TURN ME ON.
YOU MEAN IT?
YUP.
Ha ha ha ha
NO WONDER YOU'RE DRESSED UP ALL CUTE AND STUFF.
WE CAN ALL HANG OUT...
...AND CATCH SOME FIREWORKS. SOUND COOL?
HEY...
Quit raining on my parade!
Well, it's the truth.
MIND IF I TAG ALONG?
I'VE GOT NOTHING BETTER TO DO.
HUH?

...HUH?
I WISH SHE'D SMILE FOREVER.
WHAT'S SHE DOING WITH YABE...?
OH CRAP!
OH CRAP OH CRAP OH CRAP!
EXCUSE ME, PLEASE. EXCUSE ME!

I CAN'T EVEN BUY AN EXAM PREP BOOK IN PEACE.
RUMORS ARE ALWAYS WAY OFF THE MARK, ANYWAY.
THANK YOU, COME AGAIN!
"MOM NEVER LOST HER SMILE, NOT EVEN ON HER DEATHBED. SHE LIVED A FULL LIFE WITHOUT ANY REGRETS. I WANT TO DO THE SAME."
THERE'S SOMETHING SO SWEET ABOUT HER.
GRANTED, SHE CAN BE A LITTLE ODD, BUT SHE'S SO CUTE WHEN SHE SMILES.
SO VERY CUTE.
"THE MESSAGE WAS SIMPLE BECAUSE IT WAS TRUE."
ESPECIALLY THE RUMORS GIRLS SPREAD
"SOME FREAKY GIRL HAS EVEN STARTED STALKING HIM."
Actually
YOU COULD SAY I'M THE ONE STALKING HER.

WE TURNED AROUND AND YOU HAD DISAPPEARED, KAGURAZAKA-SAN.
OFF DOING MORE BABE-WATCHING, I'M SURE.
HA HA HA HA!
That's cold, y'all! Arctic!
YO! ARE YOU TRYING TO DITCH ME?
TOK TOK TOK TOK
.....
K-KAGURAZAKA-SAN!
LIKE YOU'RE ONE TO TALK, YABE! SHUT UP, OR I'LL RIP YOUR SPLEEN OUT WITH MY TEETH!
...OR THEY'RE GOING TO LOCK YOU UP AS A PEEPING TOM.
YOU'D BETTER WATCH IT, MOTOKO ...
...CAN I HELP YOU?
WHEW
KAGURAZAKA'S WITH THEM.
UHM ...
Geez!
AH HA!

HANG ON...
THAT WOULD MEAN —
...THEY'RE ON A DATE?!
SHE'S PROBABLY ALL DRESSED UP FOR THE FIREWORKS FESTIVAL
THEY LOOK LIKE THEY'RE HAVING A GOOD TIME.
SHE LOOKS BEAUTIFUL IN IT
SHE'S EVEN WEARING A YUKATA.
IS SHE REALLY GOING OUT WITH HIM?!
NO WAY.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT.
OI, YURI! WAIT UP!

YANKEE GO HOME!
COULD YOU TELL ME THE WAY TO...
OH, NO.
CRAP...
Not again
Means nothing by it
DON'T APOLOGIZE FOR ME! I HATE FOREIGNERS. THEY'LL HIT ON ANYTHING WITH A PULSE.
Absolute foreigner
I'm so sorry sir!
KAGURA-ZAKA-SAN!
NO?
SHE REALLY DOES HATE FOREIGNERS, DOESN'T SHE?
Whatever. Who cares? There should be a Security Treaty provision that would
SINGLE WORD ONE
DOESN'T REGRET
HE SPOKE PERFECT JAPANESE, KAGURAZAKA-SAN.
THEY COME INTO A PERSON'S COUNTRY, YAMMERING AWAY IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE...

HEY, MISTER! ONE ORDER OF TAKOYAKI, PLEASE.
COMIN' UP!
OCTOPUS BALLS! AWESOME!
YOU MUST HAVE A TAPE-WORM OR SOMETHING. DIDN'T YOU JUST EAT A BIG THING OF YAKISOBA?
Wow
THERE'S A TON OF PEOPLE HERE.
HEY, WHAT TIME ARE THE FIREWORKS SUPPOSED TO START?
THEY START AT DUSK, SO ABOUT 7:00.
ha ha ha ha ha
HEY, IT TAKES A LOT OF ENERGY TO FUEL MUSCLES LIKE THESE.
NOTHING COMPARED TO THE THREE PORTIONS YOU HAD. ONE OF THEM WAS SUPPOSED TO BE MINE!
BULGE
A PRETTY GIRL WHO BRAGS ABOUT HER MUSCLES?
self-trained
EXCUSE ME...
KAGURAZAKA-SAN GETS WEIRDER EVERY DAY.

IT ALL MAKES SENSE.
I BET ...
...IT'S BECAUSE KAGURAZAKA-SAN IS...
...BUILT MORE LIKE AN AMERICAN GIRL, WITH THOSE HIPS AND THINGS.
I FELT THE TEMPERATURE DROP SEVERAL DEGREES..
Y-YABE-SENPAI! DID I SAY SOMETHING WRONG?
PROBABLY NOT. SHE JUST WANTED SOME SHAVED ICE IS ALL.
HUH?
I'M GOING TO GO GET SOME SHAVED ICE.
I mean, you're tall and pretty and have naturally brown hair.
I BET THEY THINK YOU'RE HALF CAUCASIAN OR SOMETHING

IT'S NO SURPRISE KAGURAZAKA-SAN REALLY STANDS OUT.
Yeah, and tall, too. She looks like a model.
Isn't she beautiful?
YEAH, AND IT'S LIKE SHE GIVES OFF SOME KIND OF PHEROMONE, BECAUSE THEY TALK TO HER ALL THE TIME!
THAT WAS THE FIFTH TIME TONIGHT
It's hot. Maybe I should cut my hair
I LIKE HER BECAUSE SHE'S COMPLETELY HER OWN PERSON, UNLIKE ANYONE ELSE.
I MEAN, EVEN FROM A GIRL'S POINT OF VIEW, SHE'S GORGEOUS.
THAT'S IT!
NOW IT MAKES SENSE!
LIKE SHE'S--

LET ME HAVE ONE, TOO.
TAKA-HIRO.
RUMBLE RUMBLE RUMBLE
I WARNED YOU, TAKAHIRO, THAT IF YOU CHEATED ONE MORE TIME...
SWEAT
.....
SWEAT
AND WHAT DO I FIND? MY BOYFRIEND FLIRTING WITH ANOTHER GIRL. AGAIN.
I THOUGHT I SAW A FAMILIAR FACE, SO I CAME OVER TO GET A BETTER LOOK.
AS USUAL --
Come back here!
.....
DADADADA
...YABE-SENPAI LOVES TOO MANY WOMEN WITH TOO MUCH PASSION.
SORRY, ERIKO!
SENPAI ?
...I'D MURDER YOU!

B-BUT...
HERE. SAY "AHHH."
I FEEL LIKE SOME KIND OF MOMMA BIRD FEEDING A BABY CHICK.
ha haha
haha ha
HUH?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
SENPAI?
WANT ANOTHER?
BUT... YABE-SENPAI...?

Hello, everyone! I would just like to say a big THANK YOU to all of you who have purchased this, *my 30th comic book volume!*

30. That's such a nice, round number. I wonder if somebody out there owns all 30 of my graphic novels?

While thoughts like that do flit through my mind on occasion, the one thought occupying my mind right now is, "My tooth hurts." I went to the dentist for the first time in years, and I had to get a root canal. That was three weeks ago, yet my tooth still really, really hurts. (Cries)

I went back to the dentist and all he said was, "That's impossible.." So, I went to a different dentist, and now things are getting a little better. (He found out what the problem was.)

Everyone, take good care of your teeth, 'kay?

Bye-bye, bacteria!

HUH?!
YOU STILL THINK THAT LOSER'S WORTH IT, EVEN AFTER ALL THAT?
SO...
HERE.
OH! THANK YOU.
"DID YOU EVEN TELL HER HOW TAKAHIRO USED TO BE A NICE GUY...?"
"ARE YOU WITHHOLDING INFORMATION FROM HER?"
THE YABE-SENPAI I NEVER MET...
I ALWAYS GOT CHEATED ON, AND THERE WERE MORE ARGUMENTS THAN I COULD KEEP TRACK OF.
MUNCH
KAGURA-ZAKA-SAN...?
YOU KNOW HOW MUCH BAD LUCK I HAVE WITH MEN, RIGHT?

COULD IT BE SHE'S THE ONE WHO STABBED HIM?
IS HE GETTING CHASED BY A GIRL AGAIN?
THAT WOMAN WAS LUCKY TO BE LOVED BY YABE-SENPAI.
I WONDER IF SHE EVER LIKED HIM AT ALL? THAT ERIKO PERSON SURE SEEMS TO.
"DID HE SHOW YOU HIS STAB WOUND?"
"THE GIRL WHO GAVE IT TO HIM ACTUALLY LOVED HIM A LOT."
"THAT..."
"...IS THE SCAR I GOT WHEN A GIRL STABBED ME A YEAR AGO."
CHRIST, THAT DUDE'S HOPELESS.
KAGU-RAZAKA-SAN...

THE THING IS, I DON'T REGRET DATING ANY OF THEM. NOT ONE BIT.
THE PAST IS THE PAST...
I LOVED EACH OF THEM WITH ALL MY HEART.
...AND I WON'T GIVE UP.
Sadly in my case all the problems happen after I catch them.
I DON'T PLAN ON LOVING VABE ANY LESS.
I'M A GIRL WHO LIVES FOR LOVE.

huff
huff
huff
huff
I THINK... I FINALLY... LOST 'ER...
EXHAUSTED
...BECOME SUPER STRONG WHEN THEY WANT TO KICK MY ASS?
WHY IS IT THAT GIRLS WHO NEVER EXERCISE A DAY IN THEIR LIVES...
THE APTER ...
...IS THE HARDEST PART.
...HM?
I DON'T HAVE IT IN ME ANYMORE...
Ha ha
I'M NOT IN SUCH GREAT SHAPE MYSELF.

FOUND YOU!!!
...CRAP.
Takahiro...!
WHAT'S UP, HIRAO, M'MAN?!
HUH?
He's real easy to read
LOOKING AT YURI, ARE YA?
ONE VINDICTIVE WOMAN

IS THAT... HIRAO?
WHAT'RE YOU STARING AT? YOUR HEAD IN THE CLOUDS?
HIRAO ...!
YO!
?!

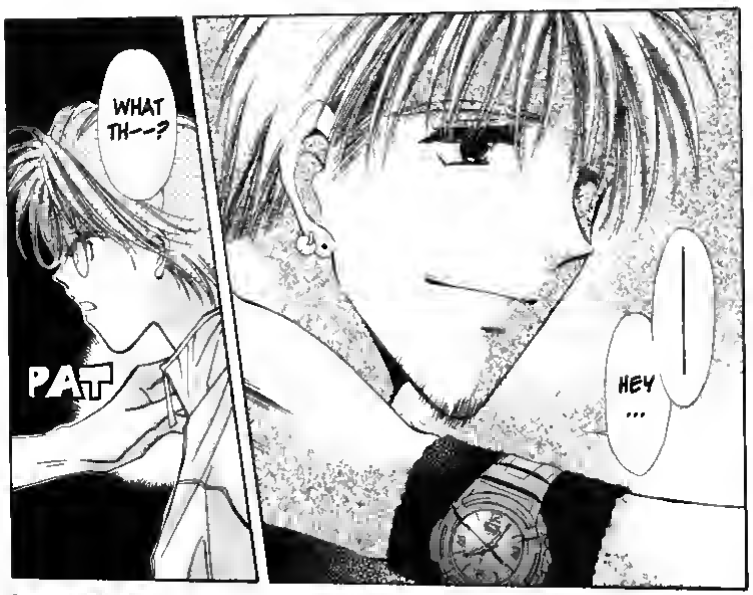
HUP
WELL, I SEE THAT NOW.
MAYBE IN SOME OTHER COMICS, NOT THIS ONE.
I THOUGHT WOMEN USUALLY LIKED IT WHEN GUYS GOT TOGETHER. YOU KNOW, YAOI AND STUFF...
THOROUGHLY
BEATEN...
THERE'S BARELY A SHRED OF THE GUY I USED TO KNOW. YOU'RE LIKE A PALE IMITATION OF YOUR OLD SELF, YABE.
WOW!
YOU'RE HOPE-LESS...

HUH?!
ERIKO I'M SORRY!
GRAB
I'VE FOUND SOMEONE NEW!
WHAT THE HECK?!
PLAY IT COOL, HIRAO!
WHA --?
だっ
だっ
HOW DID YOU EVER THINK SUCH A LAME EXCUSE WOULD WORK?
POW
POW POW
PPPPPEEEEE-
THIS IS GREAT!
WOW! THEY'RE SO PRETTY!

I WORKED MYSELF HALF TO DEATH, SWEARING I'D NEVER LOSE TO YOU AGAIN.
NOT ANYMORE, BECAUSE...
"HE'S LIKE SOME KIND OF SUPER SCARY MONSTER!"
...WHAT ARE YOU NOW?
I'LL NEVER FORGET HOW BADLY YOU BEAT ME.

"I... NGH..."
"WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU IN THE MATCH?"
"HIRAO!"
"HIRAO? YOU OKAY?"
IN THE OLD DAYS...
...I COULDN'T EVEN TOUCH YOU.
"THAT GUY COST US THE FINALS!"
"THAT YABE GUY CREAMED YOU WITHOUT EVEN BREAKING A SWEAT."
"HE WAS WAY OUT OF HIS DEPTH."

HEY!
YOU CAN'T HAVE HER!
OW! WATCH IT!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO MAKE YOU THIS WAY...
...BUT YOU'RE A PATHETIC LOSER NOW, AND I WON'T LET YOU HAVE HER!


WHAT TH--?
PAT
HEY ...

...?!
...DON'T YOU THINK?
YURI'S A TOTAL CUTIE PIE ...

THERE YOU ARE, YABE-SENPAI.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
OH. HEY.
HUH?
Oh
HEY, IT'S OUR CLASS PRESI-DENT!
HELLO!
UM... HI.
DON'T LOOK DIRECTLY AT HER.
I FIGURED YOU GUYS HAD LEFT.
PEEK
AHA!
Yabe-senpai!
WE'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER THE PLACE FOR YOU! WHAT HAVE YOU AND HIRAO-SENPAI BEEN DOING?
WATCH-ING THE FIRE-WORKS.
TWO GUYS WATCHING FIRE-WORKS TOGETH-ER?

"I... LOVE YOU."
I'M SORRY.
"I LOVE YOU..."
I SHOULDN'T HAVE JOKED AROUND LIKE THAT.
WHAT?
I SAID I'M SORRY.
HEY, LOOK.

"I LIKE IT. IT'S CUTE ON YOU."
SLIP
I MEAN, IT DOESN'T LOOK WEIRD OR ANYTHING.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
too devastated to speak
MAHAHA HAHA
Kagurazaka-san!
HE'S A LOST CAUSE.

WHAT?! KAGURA-ZAKA-SAN, WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
YURI SAID SHE HAD THIS KIMONO SPECIALLY MADE JUST FOR TONIGHT.
ISN'T IT GOR-GEOUS?
EVIL WENCH...
PUSH
OH, HIRAO-SENPAI --!
ULP
TELL ME ABOUT IT.
DOES EVERYONE KNOW ABOUT YOU?
Cute they still wear
CUT IT OUT!
You freak!
AND TELL HER EXACTLY HOW YOU FEEL.
TAKE A GOOD LOOK..
THERE'S NO BACKING OUT NOW!
I'LL DO IT!
COME ON, SENPAI!

Gatcha Gacha

Spider-Man.

Absolutely hilarious. I laughed so hard my stomach hurt. It was really, really good. And, of course, Willem Dafoe was stunning!

Right now, I'm waffling over whether to buy the DVD or not. Hmmmm, should I?

I PROMISE I'LL MAKE A CLUB MEETING SOON. I REALLY MEAN IT.
JUST TELL THEM SOMETHING CAME UP, OKAY?
SORRY, AYUMU.
AYUMU!
I'VE GOT CRAM SCHOOL TODAY, SO YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN AT THE STUDENT UNION MEETING.
You used that excuse to skip last week, too.
OH... OKAY.
AYUMU-KUN, THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO ASK YOU ABOUT HIKARU-KUN...
EVERYBODY RELIES ON ME FOR JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING.
YIKES! IT'S HIKARU-KUN!
AYUMU!
SURE.
Not again
A school swimsuit
THIS WAS IN MY BAG!
LOOK AT THIS!

I AM...
...A COMPLETELY AVERAGE HUMAN BEING.
I'M NOT GOOD AT ANY ONE PARTICULAR THING...
AYUMU!
DID YOU FINISH THE MATH HOMEWORK? CAN I SEE IT?
YEAH, I'M DONE WITH IT.
DUNNO IF I GOT ALL THE ANSWERS RIGHT, THOUGH.
Please!
'S ALL RIGHT. YOU USUALLY GET A C, AND THAT'S BETTER THAN I CAN DO.
AYUMU-KUN!

I WAS BORN TO BE EVERYONE'S DOORMAT
THEY ALL KNOW I CAN'T SAY "NO"
HM? BROTHERS OR SISTERS?
YEAH, I HAVE TWO LITTLE BROTHERS. THEY'RE TWINS THEY'RE 8TH GRADERS, BUT THEY'RE BOTH SUCH BRATS! I CAN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF THEM FOR A SECOND OR THEY'LL PULL SOMETHING.
LIAR! YOU HAVE "I LOVE THEM TO PIECES" WRITTEN ALL OVER YOUR FACE.
BEING RELATED TO TWINS IS SO COOL. CAN YOU TELL THEM APART?
SWEET.
DO THEY GET ALONG? NO SIBLING RIVALRY OR ANYTHING?
NAW, THE OLDER THEY GET, THE BETTER THEY GET ALONG.
THE OLDER ONE IS SERIOUS, AND HE ALWAYS TRIES HIS HARDEST AT EVERYTHING.
THE YOUNGER ONE IS EASYGOING AND GOOD AT GETTING PEOPLE TO DO THINGS FOR HIM.
BUT AS THEY GET OLDER, THEIR DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES HAVE STARTED TO SHOW ON THEIR FACES.
WELL, THEY WERE BORN IDENTICAL TWINS.

AYUMU!
I'M BEGGING YOU!
COACH AKIYAMA THREATENED ME WITH TEN LAPS AROUND THE ENTIRE SCHOOL IF I EVER FORGOT IT AGAIN!
I STILL DON'T HAVE MY SUIT.
AYUMU, DO YOU HAVE YOUR SUIT WITH YOU?
WHY?
NO, I DON'T HAVE GYM CLASS TODAY.
WOOPS!
THAT DOOFUS YURI MUST'VE GOTTEN OUR SUITS SWITCHED AGAIN!
HIKARU IS MY TWIN BROTHER, AND HE NEEDS ME MOST OF ALL.
WHY?
WHAT?!
IT'S EASY TO SEE...
TAKE ME TO YURI'S SCHOOL!

YUM.
KAGURAZAKA-SAN! WHY'RE YOU SUCH A HUGE PIG!?
Stepped in while running an errand for her teacher
NO! OUR SOUP'S GONE, TOO!
AUGH! ALL OUR KENCHIN-JIRU IS GONE!
AAAAAAAAH!!!
SEN-SEI!
OUR SOLE MUNIERE AND HOURENSO HO OHITASHI WAS STOLEN TOO!

"Sole muniere" is a French dish. Sole is fried and coated with a citrusy sauce "Hourenso no ohitashi" = parboiled spinach, covered with a citrusy sauce

THANKS FOR THE SNACK.
Later, gator.
BY THE WAY, YURI...
HOW MUCH OF THAT DID SHE HEAR?
I KNOW.
JUST BECAUSE YOUR BROTHERS DON'T FIGHT DOESN'T MEAN THEY GET ALONG.
Y'KNOW

I'M NOT THAT GOOD, REALLY! I'VE JUST HAD PRACTICE.
BLUSH
BLUSH
BLUSH
BUT JUST BECAUSE THEY DON'T FIGHT, DOESN'T MEAN...
THIS ALL EXPLAINS WHY YOU'RE SO GOOD AT COOKING, TOO!
OUR HOME EC GROUP GOT FULL MARKS, AND IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF YOU.
IT MUST BE NICE. MY FAMILY FIGHTS CONSTANTLY!
Hold it, Hanpei!
YEAH, IF SHE DOESN'T GET DUMPED ON THE WAY TO THE ALTAR! HAR!
MUNCH
MUNCH
They should make their own dinner.
YURI'S GONNA MAKE SOME GUY A GOOD WIFE SOMEDAY.
Yep!
RIGHT?
YEAH...
...HUH?
Oh!

WHAT?
GRMBGRL
I'M HUNGRY.
I DIDN'T HEAR ANY-THING.
I DIDN'T JUST HEAR THAT
AYUMU... I'M HUNGRY!
GET ME SOMETHING TO EAT?
PLEASE? PLEASE? PLEASE?
PLEEEEEEEEZE?
AYUMU
GLURBL GRMBL GLURGL GRRRLURGL
"... AYUMU!"
"AYUMU-KUN, THERE'S SOMETHING I WANT TO ASK YOU ABOUT HIKARU-KUN..."
"I PROMISE I'LL MAKE A CLUB MEETING SOON. I REALLY MEAN IT."
"JUST TELL THEM SOMETHING CAME UP, OKAY?"
Seriously but Charming!
"I'VE GOT CRAM SCHOOL TODAY, SO YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN AT THE STUDENT UNION MEETING."

UM, AYUMU?
WHY ARE WE SNEAKING IN THROUGH A WINDOW?
BOW
STAND
I'M SURE THEY'RE HARBORING SOME SECRET CONFLICT
WE CAN'T DO THAT. EXPLAINING WHAT'S GOING ON MEANS TELLING THEM WE'RE CUTTING FOURTH PERIOD TO BE HERE.
FINDING YURI'D BE TONS EASIER IF WE GOT THEM TO CALL HER OVER THE P.A.
Over there!
CAN'T WE JUST GO TO THE OFFICE AND EXPLAIN WHAT'S GOING ON?
GURGLE
AYUMU
Maybe when class lets out
GLR GLR G!
GRRL
NO. SHE MUST HAVE IT TURNED OFF.
YURI STILL ISN'T ANSWERING HER PHONE?
WALKING INTO A ROOM FULL OF TEACHERS IS THE LAST THING WE WANT TO DO
OH, YEAH! RIGHT
HIKARU, DID YOU THINK ANY OF THIS THROUGH?!

BEING HUNGRY FOR A LITTLE WHILE ISN'T GOING TO KILL YOU, OKAY?
...COMPLETELY AVERAGE ME...
HE DOES, WHATEVER HE WANTS, HOWEVER HE WANTS.
...TO CLEAN UP HIS MESSES IN ABOVE-AVERAGE WAYS!
LEAVING ME
HEY...!
YOU'RE NOT STUDENTS HERE.
YOU TWO.
Uh-oh...
A COUPLA JUNIOR HIGH SCRUBS ...?
HN?

EVERY TIME...
SO HOW DID I BECOME THE GO-TO GUY FOR EVERYONE'S PROBLEMS?
"DID YOU FINISH THE MATH HOMEWORK? CAN I SEE IT?"
"DUNNO IF I GOT ALL THE ANSWERS RIGHT, THOUGH."
WE HAVE TO FIND YURI AND GET OUT OF HERE AS FAST AS WE CAN!
WE CAN'T JUST STOP FOR LUNCH IN THE MIDDLE!
HIKARU, DO YOU HAVE ANY CLUE HOW STUPID THIS SCHEME OF YOURS IS?
"'S ALL RIGHT. YOU USUALLY GET A C, AND THAT'S BETTER THAN I CAN DO."
YOU ASKED ME TO HELP, AND I'M DEALING WITH IT AS BEST I CAN.
YOU DON'T THINK I'M HUNGRY?
IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME WITH HIKARU.
I'M AVERAGE: BETTER THAN SOME, WORSE THAN OTHERS.

...SCARY.
shvr
rshvr
YOU TWO!
C'MON, YOU TWO! MOVE!
OKAY ALREADY! WE HEARD YOU! GEEZ!
....HUH?
COME WITH ME.
HE... HE'S...
HUH?!
GROSS! HOMO-YAMA'S HITTING ON LITTLE BOYS AGAIN!
Get away, you sicko!
SCAT! Y' PIG!
YEESH. PEOPLE ARE SERIOUSLY TWISTED.
You better smack it off or I'll report you to the Board of Education, Homo-yama!

UH-OH.. B-BUSTED!!
WHICH JUNIOR HIGH?
YOU EITHER HAVE TO GO HERE OR WORK HERE TO BE HERE.
WHAT THE--?
.....
Y'KNOW, YOU'RE KINDA CUTE...
mutter
HOW DO WE GET OUT OF THIS?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
UHM...
NOW WHAT?

AYUMU!
OHMYGOD... OHMYGOD! SOMEBODY
KUZU-YAMA-SENSEI.
SOMEBODY HELP! PLEASE!
THESE TWO BOYS ARE STUDENTS OF KITA JUNIOR HIGH.
THEY'RE CHARTER MEMBERS OF OUR JUNIOR VARSITY KENDO TEAM.
THEY ARE?
HE'S...
...SO TALL.
THAT EXPLAINS WHY THEY'RE HERE, THEN
SINCE THERE'S A TOURNA-MENT COMING, I ASKED THEM TO COME SEE ME ABOUT PRACTI-CES.

HIKARU?
I'LL GO WITH YOU, BUT LET AYUMU BE.
HIKARU.
WHAT?
HE'S ONLY HERE BECAUSE I MADE HIM COME ALONG.
NO!
HIKARU.
OW!
I DON'T CARE WHICH ONE OF YOU IT IS, BUT SOMEBODY'S COMING WITH ME!
I'M SICK OF ALL YOU KIDS ACTING LIKE I'M SOME KINDA SLEAZEBALL.
HEY! WHO'RE YOU CALLING SKEEVY AND OLD? CUT THE THEATRICS, DRAMA QUEENS!
I HAVE TO PROTECT HIM!
DON'T, HIKARU!
YOU CAN'T GO WITH THAT SKEEVY OLD MAN! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'LL DO TO YOU!

IT'S OKAY. I'M NOT REALLY THAT KEEN ON SWEETS THINGS.
"Wonderful?"
BESIDES, THESE ARE LEFTOVERS FROM HOME EC. I CAN'T GUARANTEE THEY'RE ANY GOOD.
...UHM ...
WE CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH FOR SAVING US BACK THERE...
...OR FOR ALL THIS WONDERFUL FOOD.
I'm sick of his stomach rumbling
ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T WANT ANY? OR IS YOUR FRIEND THERE HUNGRY ENOUGH FOR BOTH OF YOU?
HIKARU, SLOW DOWN! DON'T WOLF YOUR FOOD!
You're embarrassing me
THOSE PASTRIES WERE PRESENTS FROM HIS FANS
SOMEONE AS YOUNG AS YOU SHOULDN'T BE DENYING HIMSELF YET.
...BUT...
HERE. HAVE SOME BREAD.
I-I COULDN'T. IT'S NOT THAT I DON'T LIKE SWEETS, BUT...
OH, NO. I'M TOTALLY FINE, I--
GRUMBLE
GRUMBLE

...WOULD BE SUCH AN AWESOME BIG BROTHER!
AND...
YE--
YES, SIR!
ARE YOU TWO OKAY?
...SOMEONE LIKE HIM...
Hiroo's good with kids apparently

YEAH?
SORRY IF I'M INTER-RUPTING YOUR LUNCH.
THAT'S OKAY. I JUST FINISHED.
IF I TRY REALLY HARD..
...MAYBE I CAN BE LIKE HIM SOMEDAY.
SO YOU'RE THE STUDENT COUNCIL PRESIDENT ...
...AND THE CAPTAIN OF THE KENDO TEAM?
THAT GUY IS THE COOLEST.

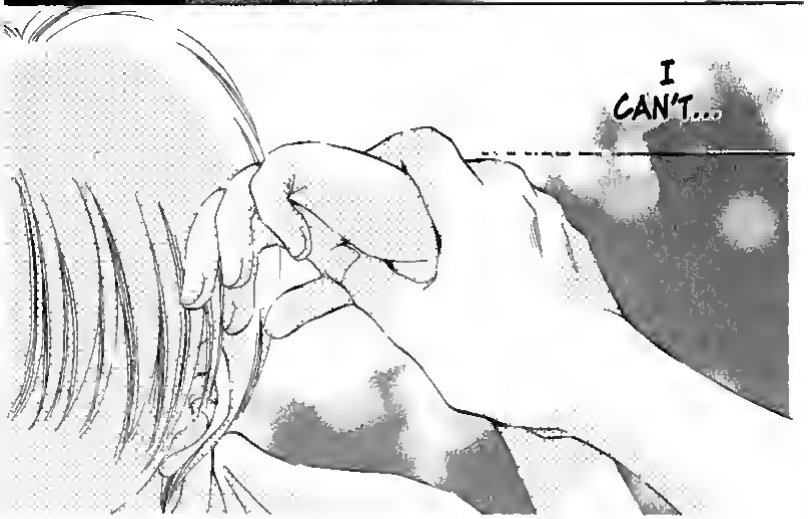
YES?
I'M SUCH A COOK.
Y-YESSIR.
HEY, MISTER ?
THANKS BUNCHES!
ALL THAT FOOD WAS REALLY SUPER, SUPER TASTY!
I'll never forget how much you rock. Not ever!
HN?
If you don't want that bread, I'll eat it for you
I have a little room left
HE MUST THINK I'M WEIRD.
WHERE HAVE I SEEN THAT EXPRESSION BEFORE ..?
CAPTAIN HIRAO.
HOW LAME DO I HAVE TO BE FOR HIKARU TO BE MORE COOL AND LIKABLE THAN I AM?

...THAT WE CAME HERE TO SWITCH SIS' SWIMSUIT FOR YOUR SPEEDO! NOT IN FRONT OF SENPAI!
YOU CAN'T EXPECT ME TO ACTUALLY SAY OUT LOUD...
waaaaaaaah
IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE HUNG UP ON? IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S MY UNDERWEAR OR NOTHIN'!
THEY PROBABLY JUST HIT PUBERTY...
Why do I always get the weird ones?
...I'VE FOUND MYSELF A COUPLE OF LOST PUPPIES.
Yeah!
IT'S ALMOST LIKE...
I KNEW IT! I BET YOU'RE GOOD AT EVERY-THING!
AFRAID SO.
AWE-SOME!
NO, THANK YOU!!
YOU WILL? GREAT!
IF YOU TELL ME HER NAME AND CLASS, I'LL GO GET HER FOR YOU.
YOU TWO ARE LOOKING FOR YOUR SISTER, RIGHT? SHE'S GOT SOMETHING OF YOURS YOU NEED?
THERE'S NO WAY I COULD SAY IT.
YOU'VE ALREADY DONE SO MUCH FOR US. WE'LL MANAGE ON OUR OWN.
AYUMU! YOU DON'T GET TO DECIDE EVERY-THING!
Hey!
Shut up, Hikaru!
Hikaru!
GUYS! SAVE THE FIGHTS FOR WHEN YOU'RE AT HOME, OKAY?
HE'S RIGHT. THEN WE'LL END UP CUTTING FIFTH PERIOD, TOO.
HIKARU! QUIET!
I CAN'T SAY IT.
WE COULDN'T ASK THAT OF YOU.
YOU'VE DONE TOO MUCH ALREADY.
AYUMU ?
BUT LUNCH BREAK IS ALMOST OVER.

NOBODY THINKS I COULD EVER BE MORE THAN WHAT I AM.
ALL MY SO-CALLED FRIENDS DUMP ALL THEIR USELESS TASKS ON ME.
WHEN WE FIRST GOT HERE...
MY LIFE IS POINTLESS BECAUSE EVERYTHING I DO IS POINTLESS.
AYUMU...?
...AND THAT FREAKY TEACHER ACCOSTED US...
...I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING. WHEN IT REALLY COUNTS, I ALWAYS FAIL!
HIKARU ALWAYS HAS TO PROTECT ME.

YOU'RE SUCH A RETARD.
AYUMU ALWAYS THINKS WAY TOO HARD ABOUT THE DUMBEST LITTLE THINGS.
DID YOU HEAR THAT, MAN?
WELL, SORRR-REEE!
I AM?
NO, I THINK YOU'RE BEING TOO HARSH ON HIM.
HE NEEDS TO LEARN TO RELAX A LITTLE, DON'T YOU THINK?
HUH?
EXCUSE ME...
...FOR BEING MERELY AVERAGE AND NOT RISING TO THE OCCASION.

I'M SO WORTHLESS.
EVEN FOR THE STUPID LITTLE THINGS, IF I DON'T PUT EVERYTHING INTO THEM...
...I'LL SCREW THEM UP, TOO.


I CAN'T...

ONLY BECAUSE YOU OPENED THE DOOR! IF YOU HADN'T GONE IN FIRST, I WOULD HAVE JUST STOOD THERE AND LET IT HAPPEN!
WHOA, HOLD IT!
YOU WERE THE ONE PROTECTING ME BACK THERE.
I'LL NEVER BE LIKE HIKARU.
YOU'RE JUST LIKE OUR SISTER...
WE MIGHT LOOK THE SAME...
...BUT ONLY ONE OF US IS CAPABLE OF GETTING THINGS DONE.
I'LL NEVER AMOUNT TO ANYTHING ...
I'LL NEVER BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANYTHING IMPORTANT, LIKE THE CAPTAIN OF THE KENDO TEAM.
IT'S NOT FAIR, HIKARU.
YOU BOTH ACT LIKE YOU COULDN'T CARE LESS ABOUT ANYTHING, BUT THEN WHEN STUFF HAPPENS, YOU SNAP RIGHT TO IT.
Hm?
...ALWAYS BRIGHT AND HAPPY.

YOU'RE A LOT LIKE ME WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE.
LIKE WHEN I MET YABE...
NOT EVEN IF SOMEBODY COMES ALONG AND BLOWS YOU OUT OF THE WATER.
I KNOW YOU CAN DO IT.
THAT'S HOW I GOT TO WHERE I AM.
HUG
YOU CAN BE WHOEVER YOU WANT TO BE!
Tug

THERE'S NO WAY THAT SOMEONE WHO TRIES AS HARD AS YOU OBVIOUSLY DO CAN'T ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING HE WANTS.
YOUR HANDS ARE COVERED WITH SHINAI CALLUSES.
YOU HAVE A LOT OF CUTS AND SCRAPES, TOO.
DO THINGS YOUR OWN WAY.
I MADE UP THAT LIE ABOUT THE KENDO PRACTICES BECAUSE I SAW YOU WERE SOMEONE WHO KNOWS HIS WAY AROUND A BAMBOO SWORD.
OTHER PEOPLE'S TALENTS ARE JUST THAT-- OTHER PEOPLE'S.
STICK TO YOUR GUNS, AND NEVER GIVE UP.

CULTURAL NOTE *A shinai is a kendo practice sword made of strips of bamboo.*

BABY-SITTING.
zzz
IT'S SWEET OF YOU TO HELP THEM.
I'M SO SORRY. MY BROTHERS CAN BE A REAL HANDFUL.
SO, THESE ARE WHAT MUROI'S BROTHERS ARE LIKE.
How fascinating
THEY WEREN'T ANY TROUBLE AT ALL.
NO. IT'S OKAY.
WE'RE SORRY!

IS IT TRUE?
YIKES! HIM, TOO?
chain reaction

OH, HEY.
AND SUPER COOL, JUST THE WAY HE IS.
WHAT'RE YOU DOING ALL THE WAY OUT HERE?

COULD I REALLY BE SOMEONE LIKE HIM SOMEDAY?
I WANT TO BE STRONG, YET GENTLE...

I NEED TO GO.
HIRAO!
HEY!
THAT'S HIRAO-SENPAI TO YOU IMPOLITE BRATS!
WHATEVER. LIKE I COULD EVER TELL HER THE TRUTH.
"...BUT YOU'RE THE ONE I REALLY WANT TO LIKE ME, YURI."
BLUSH
!
SENPAI, WE JUST WANTED TO SAY...
UHM ...
STOP WITH THE "SENPAI." YOU CAN CALL ME "ONII-CHAN."

AWHA HA HA HA... SORRY ABOUT THAT.
HIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT, YURI! NONE OF THIS WOULD'VE HAPPENED IF YOU HADN'T SWITCHED OUR SWIMSUITS!
First, you get the brothers to like you.
Hikaru!
AAAUGH! Lemme!
KASUKA-ZAKA-SAN! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
SUUURE. LIKE YOU'D MISS A GOLDEN OPPORTU-NITY LIKE THIS, HIRAO.
SERIOUSLY, THOUGH..
THANK YOU, HIRAO-SENPAI.
YOU'RE A LIFE-SAVER.
"YOUR BROTHERS ARE NICE, AND ALL..."
I KNOW THESE JOKERS APPRECIATE IT, TOO.
YOU JUST EARNED YOURSELF TWO MORE FANS, THAT'S FOR SURE!

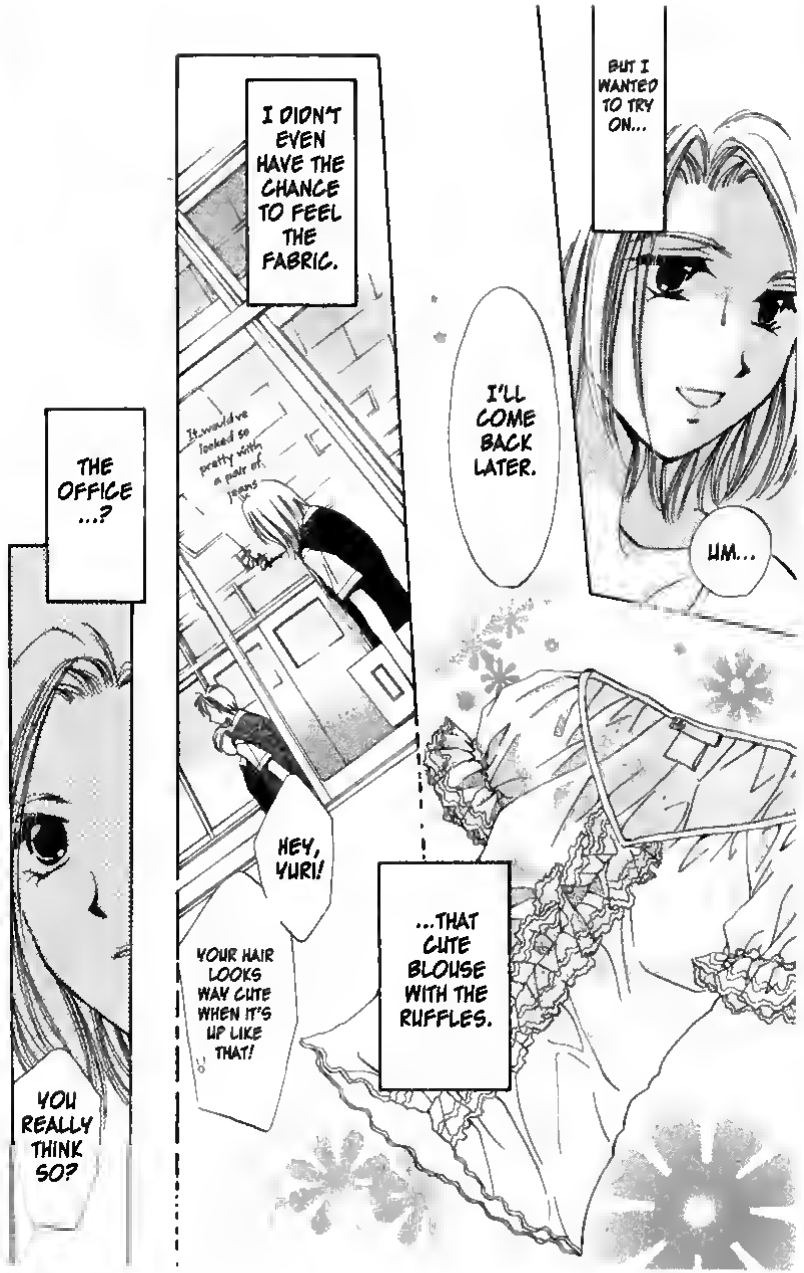
IS THIS REALLY ALL HE TOOK?
Y-YES, SIR!
YO!
HE'D BE A KICK-ASS BIG BROTHER, TOO!
AWE-SOME!
Later, boys! Be more careful next time!!
KIDS THESE DAYS...

AND IT COULD END UP HELPING ME IN THE LONG RUN.
YOU BET! THANKS FOR EVERYTHING, BIG BROTHER!
AW, ISN'T THAT CUTE?
Mr. President
Lucky jerk
?
Come along with us some more, Chiharu!
HOW COOL!
THEY'RE NOT SO BAD.

.....
Sensible V-neck Cotton lamé, perfect for the office.
WE GOT IT IN SEVERAL COLORS, BUT I THINK THIS ONE GOES BEST WITH YOUR COMPLEXION.
...THE DAY OFF?
OH, UM...
HAVE YOU SEEN THE NEW SLEEVELESS STYLE? IT JUST CAME IN.
SHE THINKS I HAVE A JOB?

Yuri's Street Clothes
Usually, she wears pants. If she wants to wear a skirt, she prefers the short ones. Anything that covers up too much leg isn't for her.

Gatcha Gacha
THANKS!
I WANTED THAT SHIRT... BECAUSE I KNOW SHE WOULD LOOK REALLY GOOD IN IT.


THE OFFICE ...?
YOU REALLY THINK SO?
I DIDN'T EVEN HAVE THE CHANCE TO FEEL THE FABRIC.
It would've looked so pretty with a pair of jeans
HEY, YURI!
YOUR HAIR LOOKS WAY CUTE WHEN IT'S UP LIKE THAT!
I'LL COME BACK LATER.
BUT I WANTED TO TRY ON...
UM...
...THAT CUTE BLOUSE WITH THE RUFFLES.

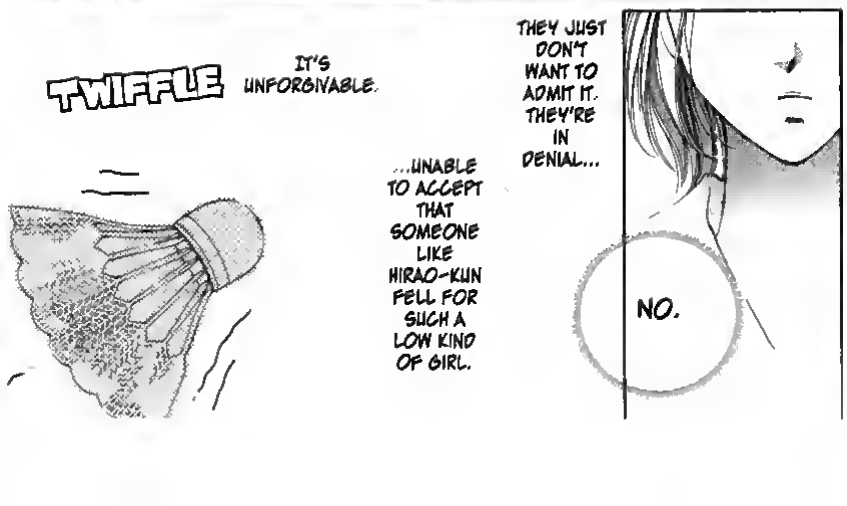
YURI'S THE ONE...
I CAN'T APPROVE THIS.
...WHO HE REALLY LIKES.
WHAT GIMMICK DID THEY COME UP WITH TO BEG FOR FUNDS THIS YEAR?
THEY WOULDN'T BE THE MALE CHEERLEADERS IF THEY DIDN'T. THEY ALWAYS HAVE TO SQUEAL ABOUT SOMETHING.
D-DON'T YOU THINK THE MALE CHEERLEADING SQUAD'S GOING TO FLIP OUT, THOUGH?
WHO EVER HEARD OF SUCH A THING?
They'll probably get it off a TV show.
B-BUT...
NEXT TO THAT IDEA, THE BASEBALL TEAM THEY'RE SUPPOSED TO CHEER FOR DOESN'T LOOK NEARLY AS PATHETIC.
HA HA HA HA!
THEY'VE OFFICIALLY REQUESTED A "SYMPATHY BUDGET."
A WHAT?!
I'LL INFORM THEM OF YOUR DECISION.
PRESIDENT HIRAO--!
They'll quit and if I tell them they need to earn it.
HIRAO-KUN...
...BUT UNTIL THEN, TELL THEM IF THEY WANT MORE MONEY, THEY NEED TO EARN IT.
MAYBE IF THEY'D PUT A LITTLE MORE EFFORT INTO THEIR CHEERING, I'D CUT THEM SOME SLACK...
HANADA?
Here
THE CLUB'S CAPTAIN IS IN MY HOMEROOM, SO IT'S NO BIG DEAL.
I CAN'T EVEN LOOK HIM IN THE EYE...
OKAY. LET'S DO THIS, THEN.
BUT, I AM YOUR VICE PRESIDENT ...
...MY GOD.
THANKS, BUT I WOULDN'T DO THAT TO YOU. THEY'LL KILL THE MESSENGER.
OKAY ...

...BUT NE'S RESPONSIBLE AND LEVEL-HEADED ENOUGH TO MAKE THE PERFECT DECISION IN A CRISIS, AND HE HAS THE NOBLE DEMEANOR TO STEP UP AND LEAD.
HEY, LOOK!
THERE'S KAGURA-ZAKA.
THAT GIRL'S REALLY HARD TO MISS, ISN'T SHE?
SHE AND YURI MUROI ARE PRACTICALLY JOINED AT THE HIP.
I'm not playing with you any more!
Sorry! It's a book club! Not this again!
HM? WAS MUROI ALWAYS SO SMOKIN'?
MAYBE IT'S HER NEW HAIR-STYLE...
...BUT SHE LOOKS PARTICULARLY HOT ALL OF A SUDDEN.
SOMETHING BUGGING YOU, EL PRESI-DENTE?
N-NO. I'M FINE.
glances
smile

FROM NOW ON, ALL REQUESTS AND CRITICISMS OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL...
...WILL HAVE TO GO THROUGH ME FIRST.
THAT...
I DON'T CARE.
YOU'RE GOING TO BE THE NEW SCHOOL VILLAIN.
FINE BY ME, BUT ARE YOU SURE YOU CAN HANDLE IT?
...I LOVE MOST ABOUT HIM.
...IS WHAT...
ON THE SURFACE, HE SEEMS COLD AND BRUSQUE...

HE'S BECOME... SOME GEEK.
CRASH
OOPS.
GEEZ!
MR. PRESIDENT!
HE'S NOT THE HIRAO-KUN I FELL IN LOVE WITH.
AM I REALLY THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SEE THAT?
YURI MUROI DID THIS. SHE'S RUINED HIM.

WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
S-SORRY.
NO, I'M FINE. HERE, I'LL CLEAN THIS...
ARE YOU OKAY, MR. PRESIDENT? Do you have a fever? YOUR FACE IS ALL RED.
WHAT THE--?!
QUIT ACTING ALL MACHO. YOU NEED TO SIT DOWN.
PRESIDENT HIRAO, ARE YOU SURE YOU AREN'T SICK?
BONK
...UP.


TWIFFLE
IT'S UNFORGIVABLE.
...UNABLE TO ACCEPT THAT SOMEONE LIKE HIRAO-KUN FELL FOR SUCH A LOW KIND OF GIRL.
THEY JUST DON'T WANT TO ADMIT IT. THEY'RE IN DENIAL...
NO.

THAT'S NOT HIM.
Seriously, take a break!
Let me do it, all right?
I cut my finger
NO.

I DON'T HAVE TO BE NICE.
NOW, THAT'S WEIRD. I COULD HAVE SWORN IT CAME UP HERE.
DARN IT. NOW KAGURAZAKA-SAN'S GOING TO GET MAD AT ME AGAIN!
NO. I DIDN'T SEE IT.
A BIRDIE?
YOU DIDN'T?
IT'S NOT LIKE SHE DOESN'T DESERVE IT. THE WHOLE SCHOOL HATES HER.
HEY, YURI! IS THIS IT?
IT LANDED OVER BY ME.
?!

...WHO UNDERSTANDS HIM...
HIRAO-KUN DESERVES A COMPANION ...
へろへろ
THAT BIRDIE ...?
PLOP
huff
huff huff
huff
I KNEW IT!
DID ANYONE SEE A BADMINTON BIRDIE COME FLYING THIS WAY?
EXCUSE ME!
IT BELONGS TO

AAAAH!
NO, STOP IT!
Especially when you smile!
RUFFLE
RUFFLE
RUFFLE
NO, REALLY. I MEAN IT.
YOU'RE THE CUTEST THING ON THE PLANET!
Huh huh
TELL ME AGAIN.
SHADDUP. I ALREADY TOLD YOU ONCE.
Now I know what you look like in the morning! Still cute!
Senpai! You messed it all up!
STUPID SLUT.
Senpai!
IT'S LIKE THEY WERE MADE FOR EACH OTHER.
HOW CONVENIENT. A BUBBLE-HEADED BIMBO AND A WOMANIZING LOSER.

EEEEE! YABE-SENPAI!
TAKAHIRO YABE?!
Hyper as always, I see
DO YOU WANT TO COME PLAY BADMINTON WITH US, SENPAI?
Thank you!
NAH, I'LL PASS. ESPECIALLY IF MOTOKO'S WITH YOU.
HE'S THE ONE YURI CRUSHES ON.
I'M NOT SURE I'D LIKE WHERE SHE'D TRY TO STICK HER RACKET.
AHAHAHAHAHA!
No doubt!
OH, HEY...
...THAT A NEW HAIRDO?
YOU LOOK GREAT.
YOU LIKE IT?
I'M SO HAPPY!

.....
THIS WAY, MAYBE ..?
GOOD GOD! HIRAO?!
Thought he was Sekine for a sec.
GLOOM
UM... HEY.
I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN A WHILE.
FELL? DUDE, YOU'RE THE MOST AGILE GUY IN SCHOOL. WHAT'S UP WITH THAT?
Wow
WHY DO I GET THE IMPRESSION YOU'RE INSULTING ME, VABE?
IT'S NOTHING. I JUST FELL, THAT'S ALL.
BUT NEVER MIND THAT, WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU? YOU'RE HURT.
DID HE SEE ME AND YURI TALKING?
SOME-TIMES I HAVE NOWHERE TO GO BUT SCHOOL.

SORRY, LADIES. I GOTTA GO.
AH, SENPAI!
HIRAO-KUN DESERVES BETTER THAN THAT.
Huh? I thought he was still single.
Hmph. He must have spotted his latest girlfriend.
WHERE DID ...?
WHAT THE --?
I- I can explain
Slacker!

I DON'T KNOW HOW ANYONE...
...COULD EVER HOPE TO RESIST A GIRL WITH CHARMS LIKE THAT!
CHARMS?
SHE'S FUN TO HANG WITH.
NO MATTER WHAT, SHE'S ALWAYS UPBEAT AND NICE.
SHE'S ONE IN A MILLION, WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT.
THERE AREN'T MANY GIRLS WHO CAN KEEP BOUNCING BACK FROM HEARTBREAK THE WAY SHE DOES.
WHAT'S YOUR OPINION OF HER?
MY OPINION?
BUT...
SHE LIKES YOU, NOT ME.
LIKE I DON'T KNOW THIS!
WHAT...
SHE'D BE FUN TO DATE ACTUALLY
She's really cute after all
WHAT?!

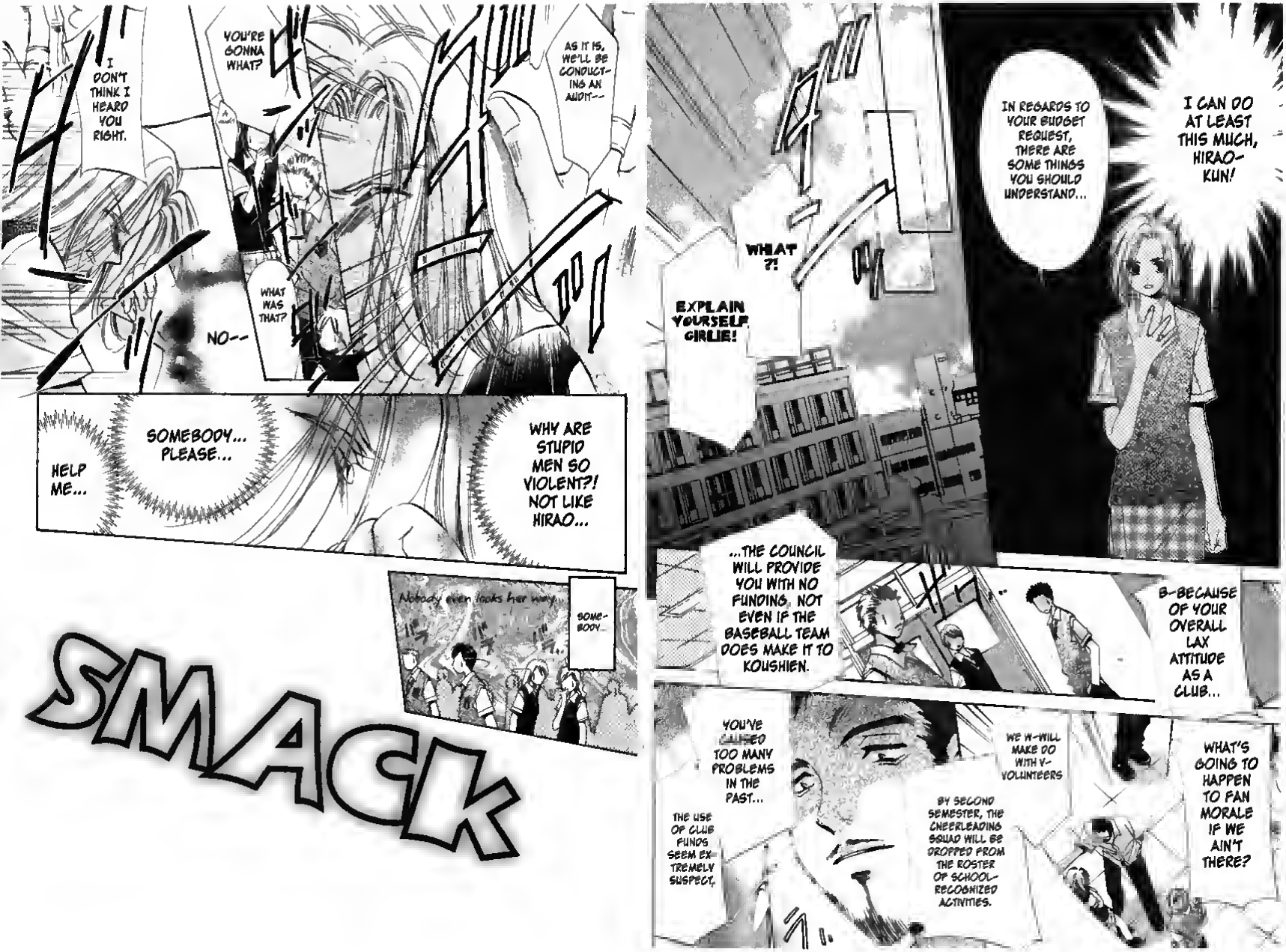
...THEN MAKE SURE YOU PROTECT YURI, 'KAY?
IF YOU'RE SO SURE YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES...
I BETTER HAVE OUT-MATCHED YOU.
IF NOT, ALL MY WORK THIS LAST YEAR HAS BEEN MEANING-LESS
MAYBE BECAUSE YOU'RE PARANOID? SERIOUSLY, I'M TOO OUT OF SHAPE TO MESS WITH YOU.
BECAUSE OF YOU, SHE'S MADE ENEMIES SHE'S NEVER EVEN MET.
AND YOU CAN BE A WUSS AND DO NOTHING, BUT THAT'LL SET THEM OFF, TOO.
I THINK WE ALL KNOW HOW SCARY GIRLS CAN GET. YOU'VE GOT TO HANDLE THIS DELICATELY, OR THEY'LL POUNCE.
THEY SEE HOW YOU LOOK AT HER, AND THEY'LL PUT HER THROUGH HELL FOR IT.
YOUR FANGIRLS DON'T CARE THAT THE TWO OF YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN ON A DATE

WHAT IS IT ABOUT HER THAT MAKES ME ACT SO STUPID?
I'M PATHETIC.
NEVER MIND CONFESSING MY LOVE TO HER, A PROPER CONVERSATION WOULD BE A MORE APPROPRIATE FIRST MOVE.
WHAT GIVES ME THE RIGHT TO TELL HIM WHAT TO DO?
AS MUCH AS I HATE TO ADMIT IT...
...YOU'RE RIGHT.
WHY ...?
WHAT?!
I GUESS IT'S KINDA LIKE...
...THAT'S THAT, AND THIS IS THIS.
LOVE?
HUH, THAT'S SOMETHING DIFFERENT SORTA.
Fair point
BUT ...
I THOUGHT YOU WERE IN LOVE WITH KAGURA-ZAKA?
IF YOU ACT ON THESE HALF-ASSED FEELINGS AND END UP HURTING HER...
...I SWEAR I'LL--
KRIK
YOU'RE LIKE THE OTHER HALF OF THE ASS.
HM?
...BUT YOU NEVER TRY TO APPROACH HER.
YOU SLINK AROUND IN THE SHADOWS, WATCHING ...
OR DOES STALKING REALLY WORK?

I can't go out there now.
AH-HA HA HA HA HA HA HA
SHE'D BE THE HOTTEST GIRL IN SCHOOL IF SHE DIDN'T LOOK SOOOOOO OLD!
IT'S NOT MY FAULT I LOOK OLDER THAN I AM!
...HIRAO-KUN LETS YURI LEAD HIM AROUND BY THE NOSE?
SO HOW COME...
BIGGEST BUBBLEHEAD
Those girls aren't good for anything but spreading nasty rumors.
I'M NOT LIKE THOSE BARBIE DOLLS WHO JUST DO THEIR MAKEUP AND GOSSIP ABOUT BOYS ALL DAY.
A PERSON'S TRUE WORTH IS WHAT LIES BEYOND THEIR LOOKS.

WHY...
HOLD IT.
DID I BULLY HIM?
Who, me?
uhm
.....
...EXCEPT FOR, WELL, YOU KNOW.
YOU KNOW KANADA-SAN? SHE'D BE A REAL BEAUTY...
Now that you mention it
I GUESS SHE'S KIND OF NICE REALLY SERIOUS THOUGH AND A TOTAL GRADE HOG.
DO YOU THINK IT'S TRUE SHE RAN FOR STUDENT COUNCIL JUST TO BE NEAR THE PRESIDENT?
WHO KNOWS?
IF YOU DON'T LOOK TOO LONG, SHE LOOKS PERFECT, DOESN'T SHE?
SHE'S GOT GOOD STYLE, TOO...BUT YOU-KNOW-WHAT RUINS IT.
YEAH. SUCKS TO BE HER.

HEY, YOU.
YOU'RE ON THE STUDENT COUNCIL, RIGHT?
HUH?
...WHO WOULD MAKE THE PERFECT FIT FOR HIRAO-KUN'S GIRLFRIEND?
WE GAVE HIM A SPECIAL REQUEST~
WHEN'S THAT PREZ GONNA GET OFF HIS BUTT AND DO THE BUDGET?
THESE TWO...
THEY MIGHT EVEN MAKE IT TO THE PLAYOFFS AT KOUSHIEN
THE BASEBALL TEAM'S LOOKING GOOD THIS YEAR.
I...
"FROM NOW ON, ALL REQUESTS AND CRITICISMS OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL..."
"...WILL HAVE TO GO THROUGH ME FIRST."
ざわ...
I-IN REGARDS T-TO...
WELL?
UH, UMM
THEY'RE FROM THE MALE CHEER-LEADING SQUAD
A GIRL WHO'S STUNNINGLY GORGEOUS...
ERK!
BESIDES, SHE'S FRIENDS WITH YURI MUROI.
NO! NOT HER! THERE ARE WAY TOO MANY BLACK RUMORS ABOUT HER.
THEN...
Listening to Inoki's "Fighter on Fire" on repeat
HIRAO-KUN'S GIRLFRIEND NEEDS TO BE PERFECT. YURI MUROI IS SLAG.
NOT THAT I'M GOOD ENOUGH, EITHER. HE NEEDS A GIRL EVERYONE ADMIRES.
A GIRL WHO'S STUNNINGLY GORGEOUS AND INCREDIBLY INTELLIGENT.
A GIRL WHO CAN DO ANYTHING.


I DON'T THINK I HEARD YOU RIGHT.
YOU'RE GONNA WHAT?
AS IT IS, WE'LL BE CONDUCTING AN AUDIT--
WHAT WAS THAT?
NO--
HELP ME...
SOMEBODY... PLEASE...
WHY ARE STUPID MEN SO VIOLENT?! NOT LIKE HIRAO...
Nobody even looks her way...
SOMEBODY...
SMACK
WHAT?!
EXPLAIN YOURSELF, GIRLIE!
IN REGARDS TO YOUR BUDGET REQUEST, THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU SHOULD UNDERSTAND...
I CAN DO AT LEAST THIS MUCH, HIRAO-KUN!
...THE COUNCIL WILL PROVIDE YOU WITH NO FUNDING, NOT EVEN IF THE BASEBALL TEAM DOES MAKE IT TO KOUSHIEN.
B-BECAUSE OF YOUR OVERALL LAX ATTITUDE AS A CLUB...
YOU'VE CAUSED TOO MANY PROBLEMS IN THE PAST...
THE USE OF CLUB FUNDS SEEM EXTREMELY SUSPECT.
BY SECOND SEMESTER, THE CHEERLEADING SQUAD WILL BE DROPPED FROM THE ROSTER OF SCHOOL-RECOGNIZED ACTIVITIES.
WE W-WILL MAKE DO WITH V-VOLUNTEERS
WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO FAN MORALE IF WE AIN'T THERE?

WHY ...?
DON'T YOU HAVE MORE IMPORTANT THINGS TO DO...
AM I RIGHT... CHEER BOYS?
...THAN THREATENING YOUR FEMALE CLASSMATES?
I'M NOT GOING TO THANK YOU.
OR WOULD YOU RATHER HAVE ROUND TWO WITH ME?
OF ALL PEOPLE, WHY HIM?
WHO?!
Y-Y-YABE!

EVERY TIME I GO TO A SHOP, THE ATTENDANTS ALWAYS TREAT ME LIKE I'M SOME SECRETARY OUT ON A LUNCH BREAK!
WOULD IT BE SO WRONG FOR ME TO WEAR CUTE BLOUSES MADE FOR TEENAGERS?
EVERYBODY'S ALWAYS THOUGHT I WAS OLDER THAN I AM, EVEN WHEN I WAS A LITTLE KID!
LOOK AT ME! I LOOK LIKE I'M 30!
I JUST WANTED TO GIVE HIM A HAND.
... HUH?
ALL I REALLY WANT...
IT'S SO STUPID!
I DESTROY EVERYTHING I TOUCH.
MAYBE I REALLY AM WORTHLESS INSIDE.
WHY DO I ALWAYS HAVE TO COMPETE WITH STUPID YURI MURO!?
I'LL NEVER KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO HAVE THE FUN SHE HAS OR TO SMILE SO FREELY!
I GET IT! I DON'T MEASURE UP! I'M HIDEOUS!
...IS TO BE PRETTY AND NICE...

WHY DID YOU HAVE TO SAVE ME, ANYWAY?
ADRENALINE HAS MADE MY KNEES TOO WOBBLY TO...
SHUT UP. LEAVE ME ALONE!
NOW WHAT DO I DO?
LIKE I CARE. CAN YOU STAND?
HIRAO WOULDN'T LIKE IT IF HE KNEW WHAT YOU WERE DOING.
...HOW ABOUT YOU DO ME A FAVOR AND STOP PICKING ON YURI?
WHATEVER. IF YOU REALLY FEEL LIKE I "SAVED" YOU...
I...
SHE'S NOWHERE NEAR GOOD ENOUGH TO BE WITH HIRAO-KUN.
DON'T GET ME WRONG, I KNOW I'M NO PRIZE, BUT STILL...
AND I DESPISE YURI MURO!
WHY ARE ALL THE BOYS SO OBSESSED WITH YURI MURO!?
I HATE YOU.

HERE I THOUGHT YOU'D DONE SOMETHING HORRIBLE.
IS THAT REALLY ALL?
I KNOW SOME-ONE...
...WHO'S CAPABLE OF WAY WORSE. SHE'S DONE THE MOST VICIOUS THINGS AND SMILED ALL THE WHILE.
TRUST ME. ON THE EVIL SCALE, YOU'RE RATED PRETTY LOW.
R-REALLY?
PLUS, YOU'RE WAY FINE. I'D CALL YOU A PRETTY GOOD CATCH, MYSELF.
AAAAHH!! YABE-SENPAI!
SEE, ALL YOU NEED IS A LITTLE MORE--
WH-WHAT ARE YOU...?
"... THAT SOMEONE LIKE HIRAO-KUN FELL FOR SUCH A LOW KIND OF GIRL. IT'S UNFORGIVABLE "
...NO ONE IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR MY HIRAO.
IT WOULDN'T HAVE MATTERED HOW PERFECT THE GIRL ...
"UNFORGIV-ABLE"? HA! I WAS SO FULL OF MYSELF!
I'M UGLY AND OLD, BOTH INSIDE AND OUT!
WHO AM I TO TALK? I'M JUST A SELF-ABSORBED, JUDGMENTAL BITCH!
I DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO HATE HER... NOBODY DOES.
...IF SOMEONE OTHER THAN ME WAS AT HIS SIDE.
I COULDN'T STAND IT ...
...HE'D LOOK AT ME AND COMPLETELY FORGET HIMSELF AND BECOME A KLUTZY DWEEB.
SO THAT INSTEAD OF HER ...

Don't cheat on me anymore okay?
Cheat...? How?
I THINK...
TOMORROW...
I UNDER-STAND.
Don't you see how pointless those words are?
But you don't listen to me if I don't say them.
...IT'S STARTING TO BECOME CLEAR.
OKAY.

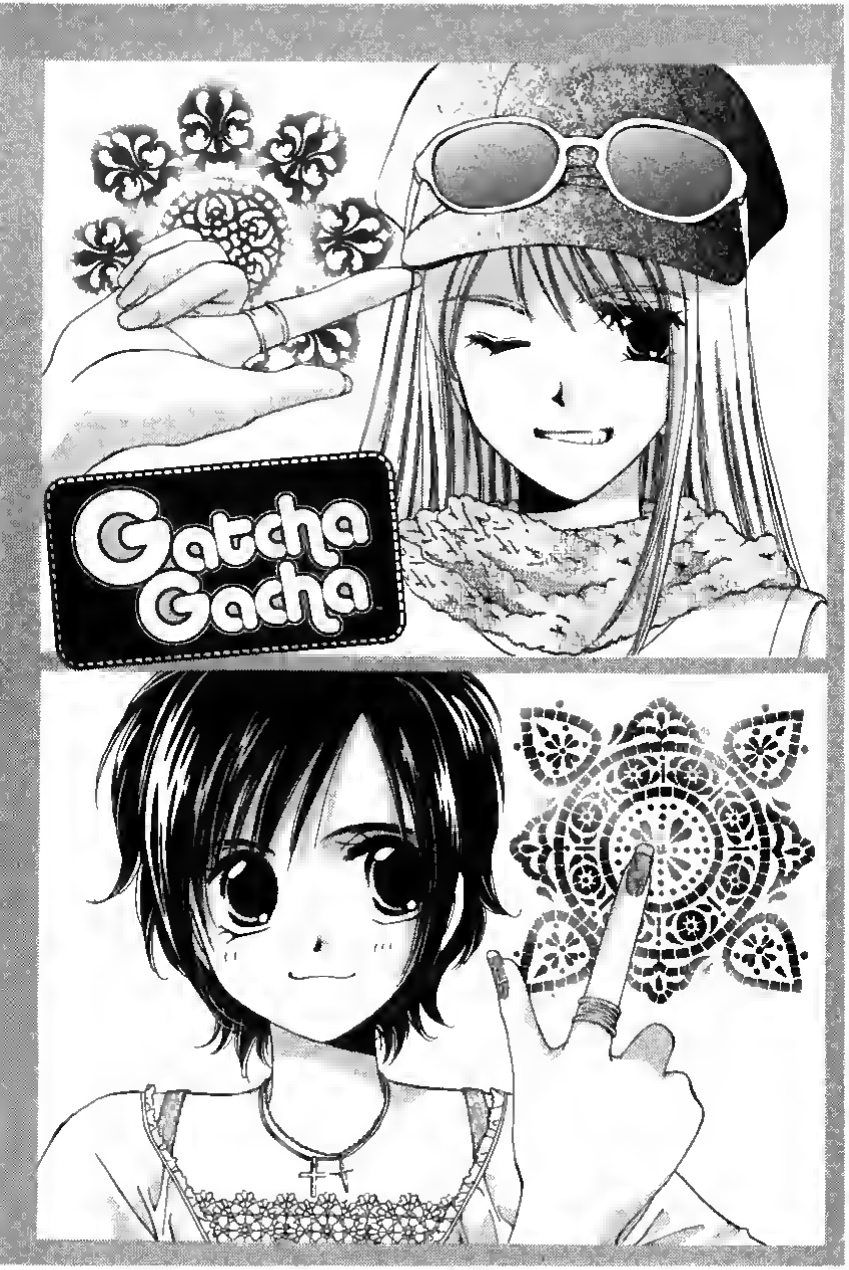
WHAT I...

...NEED A LITTLE MORE OF...?

No fair?
NO FAIR!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH HER? AND RIGHT OUT WHERE EVERYONE CAN SEE!!
AND WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "NEXT IN LINE" TO BE MY GIRL-FRIEND?
HEY, NOW. I'LL HAVE YOU KNOW, THAT'S SLANDER!
Senpai, you meanie!!
BECAUSE I'M NEXT IN LINE TO BE HIS GIRLFRIEND! SHE TOTALLY CUT!
YURI, HOW'S THIS "NO FAIR"?
"SEE, ALL YOU NEED IS A LITTLE MORE--"
...I CAN SHOW YOU THE PRETTIEST ME I CAN MANAGE!
I'M WORKING ALL DAY AND NIGHT SO EVERY DAY...
DON'T DENY IT! PLEASE!
waaah
NOT WHEN I'VE TRIED SO HARD!

"I DON'T KNOW HOW ANYONE..."
"...COULD EVER HOPE TO RESIST A GIRL WITH CHARMS LIKE THAT!"
IF I DON'T DO SOMETHING, SOON...
...WHEW.
THINGS CAN'T KEEP GOING THE WAY THEY HAVE.
...I WILL TELL HER.
NEXT TIME...

SOMETIMES, YOU NEED TO BE A LITTLE BRAZEN ABOUT LOVE.
...I'LL GO BUY THAT BLOUSE.
Epitome of brazenness
RIGHT.
CAPTAIN
ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO STAY LATE PRACTICING?
I AM. BUT YOU ALL CAN GO HOME IF YOU WANT.
I DON'T CARE IF PEOPLE SAY IT DOESN'T LOOK GOOD ON ME. I WANT TO WEAR IT, SO I WILL.
Yessir See you tomorrow
Good night!
RIGHT I CAN DO THIS.



This is the sketch I did for one of the summer covers for *Melody* magazine (I forget which month). Actually, it's the rejected sketch. They eventually used one with only Motoko on it. Here, she looks a lot more like a long-haired guy than a girl. As I was drawing this I realized that, y'know, Motoko doesn't really look good in typical girl clothes. I didn't add any tone to this illustration because I wanted readers to enjoy the simplicity of the plain sketch.

Seriously, it wasn't because I was being lazy or anything. Ohho ho ho ho...

*(Just trying to dress her to her strengths, really.)*

B-BUT... THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
Infirmary
I MEAN, KAGURAZAKA-SAN...
I'M ONLY A NURSE, NOT A FULL DOCTOR. BESIDES, KAGURAZAKA-SAN SAYS SHE ISN'T IN ANY PAIN.
I'VE DONE EVERY-THING I CAN.
WE NEED A SECOND OPINION, EVEN IF IT'S JUST YOURS. TAKE A CLOSER LOOK!
THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT!
WAIT A MINUTE, SENSE!!
.....
IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE SHE'D GET A SPRAINED ANKLE!
OH, THAT?
Our school uses Hollywood style glass in the windows.
WA AAAA
KRAK!
CRASHED THROUGH A PLATE GLASS WINDOW!!
YOU CAN'T TELL ME SHE DIDN'T GET CUT ANY. WHERE!

*Band of Brothers.*

I don't know why, but I've always really liked war movies.

(*L.A. Confidencial* was another good one. It's not a war movie, but it was still really good. I started liking Russell Crowe after I watched it.)

KAGURAZAKA-SAN, WHY DON'T YOU JUST LET KUZUYAMA-SENSEI TAKE YOU HOME?
NO WAY AM I RIDING IN THAT CHICKEN HAWK'S CAR! WHO KNOWS WHAT'S GONE ON IN THERE!?
DO IT! OR ELSE THE WHOLE SCHOOL'S GOING TO KNOW ABOUT YOU AND YABI-SENPAI AND THIS WHOLE LOLI-CON NURSE SETUP YOU'VE GOT GOING!
YOU TAKE ME HOME, SHINJO.
You thug!
WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO DROP THE LOLI-CON THING?
Mr. Kuzuyama
I THINK KUZUYAMA-SENSEI IS FREE NOW. HE COULD TAKE YOU.
YEEEEk!
YOU ...
IN FACT, YOU'RE THE ABSOLUTE LAST PERSON...
WELL, YOU'RE CERTAINLY NOT MAN ENOUGH FOR THE JOB, YABE.
FINE, THEN. I'LL WALK YOU HOME YOU CAN LEAN ON ME!
SO SHE'LL SHUT UP BEFORE SAYING SOMETHING REALLY (BAD!
FORGET IT
Mme too!
SHE'S WAY HEAVIER THAN SHE LOOKS.
HUH?
GRR

What's the deal here?!
Yuri-san, calm down
WHY DOES EVERYTHING HAVE TO BE SO DIFFICULT WITH YOU, MOTOKO?
YOU JUMPED THROUGH A WINDOW WITHOUT A SCRATCH! AND YET YOU CAN'T WALK WITHOUT INJURING YOURSELF?! THAT'S THE STUPIDEST THING I'VE EVER HEARD!
ON OUR WAY HERE, I PUT MY FOOT DOWN FUNNY...
QUIT ACTING LIKE A BIG SHOT. ADMIT YOU'RE IN PAIN, AND LET SOMEONE TAKE YOU HOME.
SERIOUS-LY.
I'D TAKE YOU HOME, BUT MY SHIFT ISN'T UP. YOU WANT ME TO ASK ANOTHER TEACHER?
ARE YOU KIDDING? I DON'T EVEN CONSIDER THIS AN "INJURY."
STEP
ANYWAY, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
YOU CAN'T WALK HOME ON THAT ANKLE. NOT EVEN YOU ARE THAT TOUGH.
UHM

UHM...
IT'S OKAY.
R-KLAK R-KLAK
More her style
R-KLAK R-KLAK
I'M REALLY SORRY TO BOTHER YOU WITH ALL THIS.
WHA--? OF COURSE NOT!
I HATE TO ASK YOU THIS, BUT COULD YOU WALK MOTOKO HOME FOR ME?
BULL'S-EYE
R-KLAK
NAH, SOME THINGS ARE MORE IMPORTANT...
IF YOU SAY SO. I HOPE HABE DIDN'T CON YOU INTO IT. IS
WE SHOULDN'T HAVE INTERRUPTED YOUR KENDO PRACTICE.
R-KLAK R-KLAK

...HAPPENED BETWEEN THEM?

HUH?
HEY...
EXCUS
...
YOU CAN HOLD ON TO ME... IF YOU WANT.
THE TRAIN CAN BE DANGEROUS. YOU NEED TO BE ANCHORED TO SOMETHING.
...HUH?

...YURI'S GOING ALONG, AS WELL? SHE'S CARRYING MOTOKO'S BAG FOR HER.
FREEZE
OH, AND DID I MENTION ..
C'MON, MAN, SHE'S HURT.
YOU INTERRUPTED MY PRACTICE JUST FOR THAT? SCREW YOU.
I'M GOING BACK.
Feels like he shook hands with the devil
OH, REALLY? SO YOU AND HE GET ALONG NOW, EH?
EVIL CHIN
I CAN'T TRUST YABE.
YOU HIDE IT WELL.
WOW. YOU AND YABE-SENPAI MUST BE BETTER FRIENDS THAN I THOUGHT!
KYA!
UWA!
Is he trying to help me..?
Or is he messing around?
WHAT IN THE WORLD IS HE UP TO?

I JUST WANT HER TO SMILE AT ME. JUST ONCE.
You're so nice, Senpai
QUICK, BEFORE THE MOMENT PASSES.
"I DON'T KNOW HOW ANYONE ..."
YOU'RE WEL-COME
TELL HER. DO IT NOW!
"...COULD EVER HOPE TO RESIST A GIRL WITH CHARMS LIKE THAT!"
I...
I DON'T CARE IF I'M TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION.
I'M NOT GOING TO LOOK A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH, EVEN IF IT IS FROM YABE.

Progress!
!
YES!
I SAID IT!
...WHAT?
...CAN HOLD ON TO ME IF YOU WANT.
YOU...
YOU
...CAN HOLD ON TO ME IF YOU WANT.
Um...
WELL ...
IF YOU INSIST.
TEE HEE.
THANKS, HIRAO-SENPAI.
My hero!
SQUEEZE

THE KAGURA-ZAKA ESTATE.
GRUMBLE GRUMBLE
I THOUGHT WE'D NEVER GET HERE.
OH, MY...!
...?!

M-MUROI?
THIS TIME...
FOR SURE!
H-HIRAO! YOU KNOW...
L..!
YES?!
UM...
...FOR SURE.
YES?
HUH?
DENIED AGAIN...
Kagura-zaka-san, are you okay?
Sorry, Kagura-zaka-san.
BLAH BLAH BLAH
BLAH BLAH BLAH
...I'M STILL HERE, OR DID YOU FORGET?

GOOD GRACIOUS! MISTRESS!
YOU'VE BEEN HURT!
IT'S JUST A SPRAIN.
HOP
TRUST ME YOU CAN'T MAKE A JOKE I HAVEN'T ALREADY THOUGHT OF.
WHERE DID YOU FIND THESE SENIOR CITIZENS? THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT?
GOOD AFTERNOON. EXCUSE US..
Oh, are you friends of the mistress?
Oh, my
OR IS THIS AN OLD-FOLKS HOME?
HOW ABOUT YOU TAKE YOUR TWISTED FOLK REMEDIES AND SHOVE 'EM INSTEAD ?!
YA OLD BIDDIES!
DON'T BE SILLY. THAT'S FOR ATHLETE'S FOOT.
SHE SHOULD SOAK HER FOOT IN BOILED BROTH OF DAIKON RADISH.
The obscure knowledge of a grandmother
No! That's for knees.
CUT AN EGGPLANT AND RUB THE INSIDES AGAINST THE WOUND
OH, DEAR, YOU POOR CHILD! I'LL GET ICE!

MISTRESS
I'M HOME ...
...WELCOME HOME.
THIS PLACE IS HUGE! IT'S A MANSION!
YURI, QUIT GAWKING LIKE AN IDIOT AND HURRY UP!
SHE HAS... MAIDS?
WHAT --?!
Welcome home, mistress
THEY EVEN HAVE A UNIFORM WITH A FRILLY WHITE APRON!
Add white stockings and a garter belt and the stereotype is complete
A MUST-HAVE FOR EVERY WEALTHY FAMILY
HONEST TO GOODNESS SERVANTS, WHO TAKE CARE OF THE HOUSE AND EVERYONE IN IT!

WOW
HM?
WHAT'S THIS? FRIENDS OF YOURS?

...REALLY KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT KAGURA-ZAKA-SAN?
TIGER'S DEN
MAY-BE NOT
Useless! Every single one of them!
FOLLOW ME, YOU TWO. THIS WAY.
Excuse us.
DO I...

ISA-SAN!
WHERE'S THAT TEA I TOLD YOU TO BRING TO MY STUDY?
What? I can't hear you, sir!
FORGET IT! I'LL MAKE IT MYSELF!
Why have maids then?
IF YOU'D HIRE SOME HELP THAT DIDN'T HAVE BOTH FEET IN THE GRAVE...
...YOU WOULDN'T HAVE THESE PROBLEMS, OLD MAN.
Um... hello.
SHORT!
WHOA.
QUIET YOU!
Kagurazaka san!
WHO IS IT THAT YOU THINK HAS DRIVEN US TOWARDS AN EARLY DEATH? HMM?
So? Did you say something funny?
YOU WOULDN'T HAVE TO LOOK VERY FAR...
...TO SEE WHO A WORTHLESS BRAT LIKE YOU TAKES AFTER!

STINK-ING BRAT.
cold
IT'S AMAZING HOW THOSE COMMONER'S CLOTHES YOU WEAR SUIT YOU SO WELL.
heh heh heh
AT LEAST I HAVEN'T DECAYED ALL THE WAY TO THE PIT OF MY SOUL THE WAY YOU HAVE.
EH, GRANDPA?
I DIDN'T THINK SOMEONE AS ROTTEN AS YOU...
...COULD ACTUALLY MAKE FRIENDS.
GEE-ZER!
YOU SURE CAN TALK TRASH!
SHADOAP!
THAT... IS KASHIWA-ZAKA-SAN'S GRAND-FATHER?
Insolent teenager!
I want compli-ment-ing you!

Today, we'll visit a character we saw for the first time way back in Chapter 2, Mr. Homoya—er, Mr. Kuzuyama. The vast majority of the shojo manga fans out there, both boys and girls, aren't particularly fond of him.

Truth be told, I kinda like the guy I want to draw him again sometime if there's an opportunity in the story. Would you mind?

Masao Kuzuyama

I thought up his first name just now.

He's not a bad guy. He's just misunderstood.

B-BUT THAT'S ASKING TOO MUCH OF YOU.

I'LL JUST RUN THE REST OF THE WAY.

NO WAY. MOTOKO TOLD ME TO TAKE YOU ALL THE WAY TO YOUR FRONT DOOR. SHE'LL SLAUGHTER ME OTHERWISE.

Didn't sweat it

FWIP FWIP FWIP

ALL OF THIS CAN'T BE EASY ON YOU.

I'LL... BE FINE.

I'M SURE YOUR LIFE IS WAY MORE COMPLICATED THAN MINE.

ESPECIALLY NOW...

I'm leaning his cane

IT'S NOT ALWAYS THIS BAD. IT'S JUST WEDNESDAYS THAT I HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT.

THIS HEAVY, STIFLING AIR...

THIS AIR...

I'VE FELT IT AROUND KAGURAZAKA-SAN BEFORE.

HM...I SHOULD BE FINE THE REST OF THE WAY.

GRANDPA...

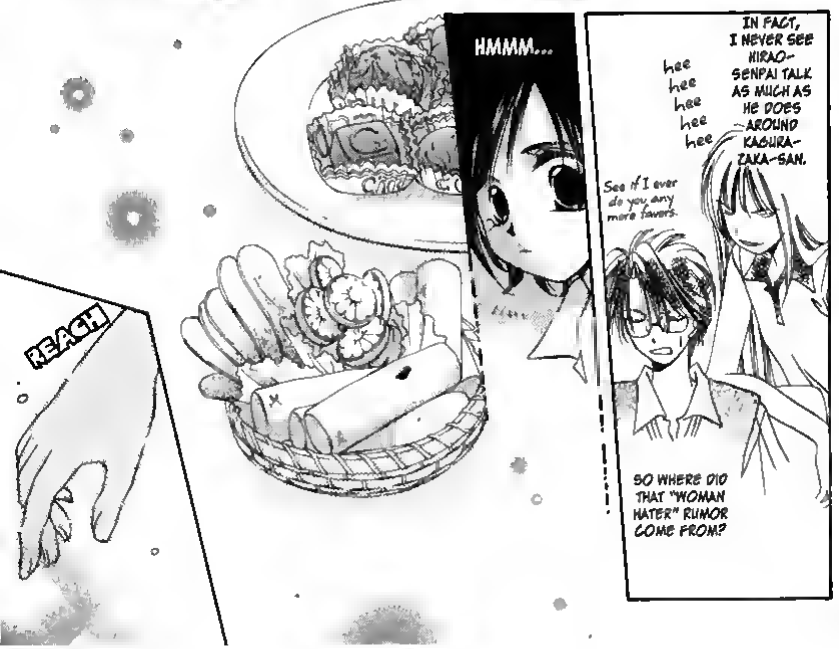
WE'RE GOING TO USE THE PARLOR.

....WHAT?

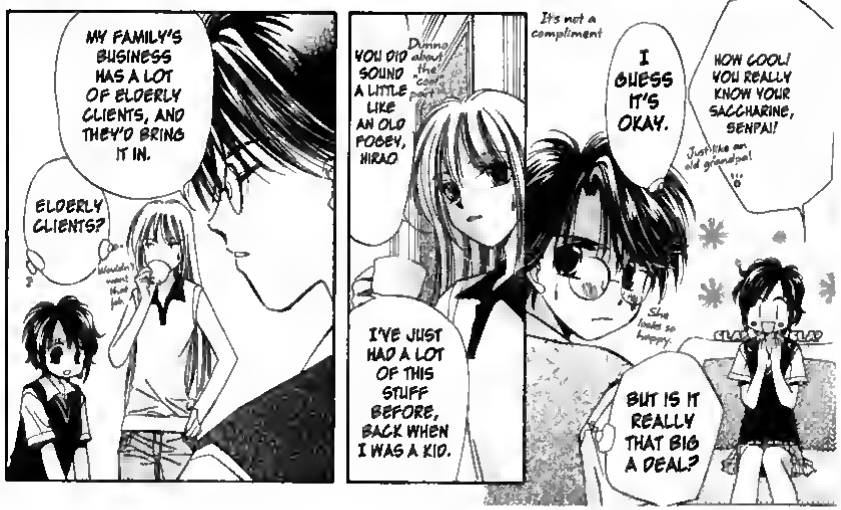
A LOT OF STUFF HAS GONE DOWN AT THAT MANSION.
"SO, YOU MUST BE MOTO-CHAN'S FRIEND."
...THAT MY SCAR TWINGES JUST THINKING ABOUT IT.
SO MUCH...
TOO MUCH STUFF.
OH MY GOSH, I'M SO SORRY!
STARE
I'VE SAID ENTIRELY TOO MUCH!
NAH.
REALLY ...?
IT'S NOT LIKE YOU'RE WRONG.
'S COOL.
THAT'S WHY...
...YOU COULDN'T HELP KAGURA-ZAKA-SAN HOME TODAY.
YOU HAVEN'T FORGOT-TEN ...
...ABOUT HER AT ALL, HAVE YOU?

WRONG SORT OF WOMAN
YOU DON'T HAVE TO EAT ANY OF THAT CANDY IF YOU DON'T WANT TO.
W-WOULD YOU STOP SAYING THINGS LIKE THAT?
LOOKS LIKE WE'VE BOTH FALLEN FOR THE WRONG SORT OF WOMAN.
EVEN IF I DID, I DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO...
...to even think about...
Really shy for a high-school boy
FOR INSTANCE, I'M ON THE HUNT FOR A GORGEOUS BABE WITH KIND EYES THAT CAN SOOTHE MY WOUNDED SOUL AND PUT ME ON THE STRAIGHT-AND-NARROW.
Okay
S-SENPAI!
That's surprising, Yabe-?
THERE ARE THINGS ABOUT ME THAT NEED FIXIN'.
I THOUGHT I'D MANAGED TO GET HER OUT OF MY HEAD...
...BUT I GUESS MY BODY HAS OTHER IDEAS.
YABE-SENPAI...
UM...DO YOU REALLY THINK K-KAGURA-ZAKA-SAN IS THAT KIND OF GIRL?
SEKINE! I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE SUCH A CONNOISSEUR OF THE FEMALE SPECIES!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! DON'T TWIST MY WORDS!
And what do you mean "connoisseur"?

SINCE IT CAME OUT OF YOUR MOUTH, I KNOW IT'S GOTTA BE AN INSULT.
WHAT'S THAT MEAN?
YEAH, RIGHT. LIKELY STORY! YOU STEPPED RIGHT PAST "MAMA'S BOY" INTO BEING A "GRANDMA'S BOY"!
THEY'RE SUCH A CUTE COUPLE.
HEY WHOA!
OR A STIFF-NECKED COOT. OR TOO SERIOUS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD. OR A COWARD WHO'LL NEVER COME CLEAN ABOUT--
Stop right there, big mouth!
WHY YOU ...!
Not saying you're a moldy fossil at all
EVIL GRIN
INSULT? NO, NO. IT WASN'T ME WHO IMPLIED THAT YOU'RE AN OLD COOGER.


HMMM...
IN FACT, I NEVER SEE HIRAO-SENPAI TALK AS MUCH AS HE DOES AROUND KAGURA-ZAKA-SAN.
hee hee hee hee
See if I ever do you any more favors.
SO WHERE DID THAT "WOMAN HATER" RUMOR COME FROM?
REACH

THEY'RE CALLED "RAKUGAN."
HMM? THESE ONES LOOK LIKE BIG PUFFS OF SUGAR!
IT'S ALL OLD FASHIONED STUFF THE GRANNY MAIDS MAKE. THEY'RE TRYING TO WARP OUR YOUTHFUL TASTE BUDS.
THERE'S EVEN SOME FUGASHI. SWEET BRAN!
AND THOSE ARE HOSHI-IMO--DRIED SWEET POTATOES.
IT'S FLOUR AND SUGAR MIXED WITH CANDY SYRUP AND PRESSED INTO MOLDS.
RAKUGAN?
What're they?


MY FAMILY'S BUSINESS HAS A LOT OF ELDERLY CLIENTS, AND THEY'D BRING IT IN.
ELDERLY CLIENTS?
Wouldn't want that job.
YOU DID SOUND A LITTLE LIKE AN OLD FOGEY, HIRAO
Dunno about "cool," but I'm pretty mature.
I'VE JUST HAD A LOT OF THIS STUFF BEFORE, BACK WHEN I WAS A KID.
It's not a compliment
I GUESS IT'S OKAY.
HOW COOL! YOU REALLY KNOW YOUR SACCHARINE, SENPAI!
Just like an old grandpa!
She looks so happy.
(CLAP CLAP CLAP)
BUT IS IT REALLY THAT BIG A DEAL?

YOU MIGHT SAY A LOT OF HASTY THINGS, KAGURAZAKA-SAN!..
YOU'RE SECRETLY A GOOD PERSON.
..BUT DEEP DOWN, YOU'RE A SWEETHEART.
NO
Y'know, these aren't half bad.
YURI ...
...never mind
BELIEVING DIPPY STUFF LIKE THAT IS WHY BOYS TREAT YOU LIKE GARBAGE.
RIGHT, SENPAI?
She's so lovable
.....

HUH ?!
I'D SUGGEST STICKING TO THE GODIVA CHOCOLATES.
WELL, ANYWAY, ALL I'M SAYING IS SOME OF THEM ARE NASTY.
MUNCH
WELL, USUALLY WHEN SOMEONE PUTS OUT CANDY FOR VISITORS, THEY LEAD WITH THEIR TOP CHOICE.
AND MY GUESS IS THAT THE MAIDS REALLY PUT THESE OUT FOR US BECAUSE THEY'RE WHAT YOU PREFER TO EAT.
Hmm
THOUGH, MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT, THE GODIVA CHOCOLATES ARE BETTER.
Ahem! It's a redrawn!
YURI! DOES THAT LOOK LIKE A GODIVA TO YOU?
YEAH, BUT DON'T YOU REALLY LIKE THESE BETTER?
NIBBLE
SAY WHAT ?!
.....
EVEN SO...
...THEY HAVE A REAL... GENTLE FLAVOR.

HE'S SUCH A--
KAGURA-ZAKA-SAN...
IS THIS YOUR... LITTLE SISTER?
YOU NEVER MENTIONED HER
HOLD ON...
THAT STORY...
..WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A LIE.
"KANAKO-CHAN."

AAAH!
GAWD ...
I MEAN, REALLY ..
WHAT NOW?!
A PICTURE OF YABE-SENPAI!
EEEE! CAN I SEE IT?
IT'S LIKE YOU'RE RELATED OR SOME-THING!
WOW, THERE ARE LOADS OF THEM!
IS THAT POSSIBLE ?
HE LOOKS DREAMY WITH BLACK HAIR!
YURI!
Hey HOLD IT...

"KAGURAZAKA-SAN WAS LATE COMING HOME, SO HER SISTER WENT TO MEET HER."
"AFTER SHE LEFT THE HOUSE, SHE HAD AN ATTACK..."
I KNOW I TOLD THOSE OLD BIRDS TO HIDE THESE.
THAT'S MY OLDER SISTER.
WHAT?
WAIT. BACK UP A MINUTE.
SO, WHAT YOU TOLD ME BEFORE WAS REALLY TRUE?
.....
YOUR... OLDER SISTER?
YEAH. ALL I DID WAS SWITCH OUT "OLDER SISTER" FOR "YOUNGER SISTER."
WHAT DID YOU DO THAT FOR?
YOU'RE KIDDING?!
WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING, HIRAO-SENPAI?
HUH?!
HOME.
I DON'T KNOW. I GUESS IT JUST SOUNDED MORE BELIEVABLE.
I'VE DONE WHAT WAS REQUIRED OF ME.
I COULDN'T STAY IN THERE.
...IT WAS TOO RAW, TOO HONEST FOR ME TO HANDLE.
HER OUTBURST
"HE LOOKS DREAMY WITH BLACK HAIR!"
"A PICTURE OF YABE-SENPAI! EEEE! CAN I SEE IT?"
YUK! SQUEALING AT YABE'S PHOTO MUST TOTALLY KILL HIM.
YEAH, THANKS.
OOOH! THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR EVERYTHING, SENPAI!
BOW!
BOW
BOW
LEAVING SO SOON?
THERE ARE ECHOES OF YABE WHEREVER WE GO.
STILL...
WHY CAN'T I THINK STRAIGHT?
SADLY, HER OPENNESS IS ALSO WHY SHE'S SO CUTE.
Man in love are strange

Is it still a seat-of-the-pants kind of business?
Yes. Very
It's probably only gotten more run down since you last saw it.
Your grandpappie was skilled, but he never knew how to make money. He was too compassionate.
AHAHAHA


Since you're here...
Do you know how to play go?
Go? I'm afraid not.
I can play a decent game of shogi, though.
GLOOM
.....
Feels like he took an old man's last shred of hope.

You know Takahiro?!
TWITCH
Was Takahiro Yabe...
...a skilled player?

...Hmm?
Why don't you stick around awhile?
ALOHA

I know. You're Hirao's boy. Your family runs the Hirao clinic.
I attend Meirin High with Motoko...
I don't even think we introduced ourselves properly.
Thank you, but no. There are things I have to do at home.
He changed his clothes... A Hawaiian shirt?
I hope our arriving unannounced like this was okay.
You're familiar with my family's practice?
When I was younger, your grandfather was my doctor for a time. You look just like him
Tall handsome and upright
Um, sorry?

HUH?
IT'S BEEN BARELY A YEAR SINCE THAT CHILD WAS NEARLY KILLED UNDER THIS ROOF.
BY HER.
WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?
YOU HEARD ME.

SHOULD I ...
... BRING HIM ALONG NEXT TIME?
BUT...
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN TELL HIM YABE'S TURNED INTO A BLEACHED-BLOND WOMANIZER WHO SPENDS MORE TIME IN FIGHTS THAN HE DOES IN SCHOOL.
IS HE STILL PRACTICING MARTIAL ARTS?
HOW IS THE BOY?
EVEN GRANDPA HAS YABE FEVER.
I WAS THE ONE WHO GOT HIM STARTED ON GO.
NO MATTER WHAT YOU DO, HE WON'T COME.
I DOUBT HE'LL EVER SET FOOT IN THIS HOUSE AGAIN.
BUT WHY...?
I COULD TIE A ROPE AROUND HIS NECK AND DRAG HIM HERE, IF--
HE WON'T COME.
HUH?
I'M SURE IT WOULD BE EASY.
?
NO.
THAT'S OKAY.
HE'S HAD A LOT OF FREE TIME AS OF LATE.

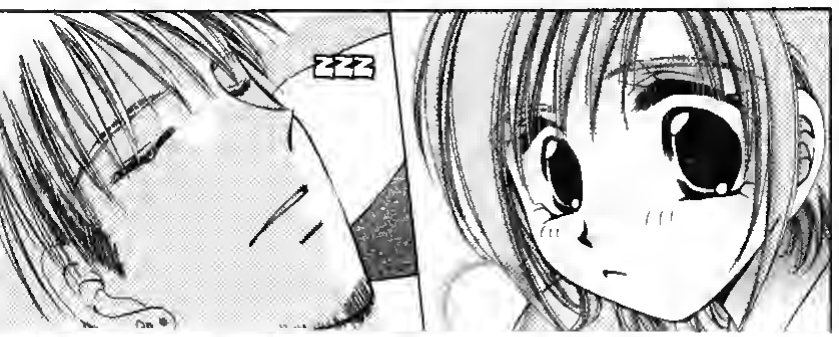
SHE STABBED HIM WITH HER HATRED AS MUCH AS THE KNIFE.
HOW COULD IT BE--?
FOR AS MUCH AS HE LOVED HER, SHE DESPISED HIM.
HE KEPT GIVING, AND SHE KEPT TAKING.
SHE KNEW EXACTLY HOW TO PLAY HIM AND WAS RUTHLESS ABOUT IT.
"IT'S JUST THE TWO OF US, MOTO-CHAN, ALONE AGAINST THE WORLD."

I CAN'T THINK...
N-NO WAY.
THAT JOKE'S NOT FUNNY, KAGURAZAKA-SAN. YOU'RE TOO MORBID SOMETIMES.
I'M NOT KIDDING, YURI.
WHAT?
KANAKO AND YABE... ...USED TO GO OUT TOGETHER.
SO THEN... THE WOMAN YABE-SENPAI WAS MADLY IN LOVE WITH...
MY MIND'S GONE BLANK.
THE WOMAN HE WAS MADLY IN LOVE WITH. THE WOMAN HE STILL LOVES.
YOU GUESSED IT-- KANAKO.
A-AND...
THE ONE WOMAN HE STILL LOVES...?
THE WOMAN WHO STABBED HIM.
"MOTO-CHAN."
THEY'RE ALL THE SAME PERSON:--THE ONE IN THAT PICTURE WHO LOOKS LIKE SHE WOULDN'T HURT A FLY.

"SHE STABBED HIM WITH HER HATRED..."
"FOR AS MUCH AS HE LOVED HER, SHE DESPISED HIM."
"HE KEPT GIVING, AND SHE KEPT TAKING."
"SHE KNEW EXACTLY HOW TO PLAY HIM..."

...ONLY EVER LOVED ME.
"I LOVE YOU, MOTO-CHAN. WE'LL ALWAYS BE TOGETHER."
SHE... KANAKO...
KANAKO...

Gatcha Gacha
WHAT REALLY HAPPENED BETWEEN THE THREE OF THEM?
bonus
YABE-SENPAI LOVED KANAKO-SAN.
BUT KANAKO-SAN ONLY LOVED KAGURA-ZAKA-SAN. WAS IT MERELY THE BOND BETWEEN SISTERS?
WHAT...
...REALLY HAPPENED?
"SHE... KANAKO..."
"...ONLY EVER LOVED ME."



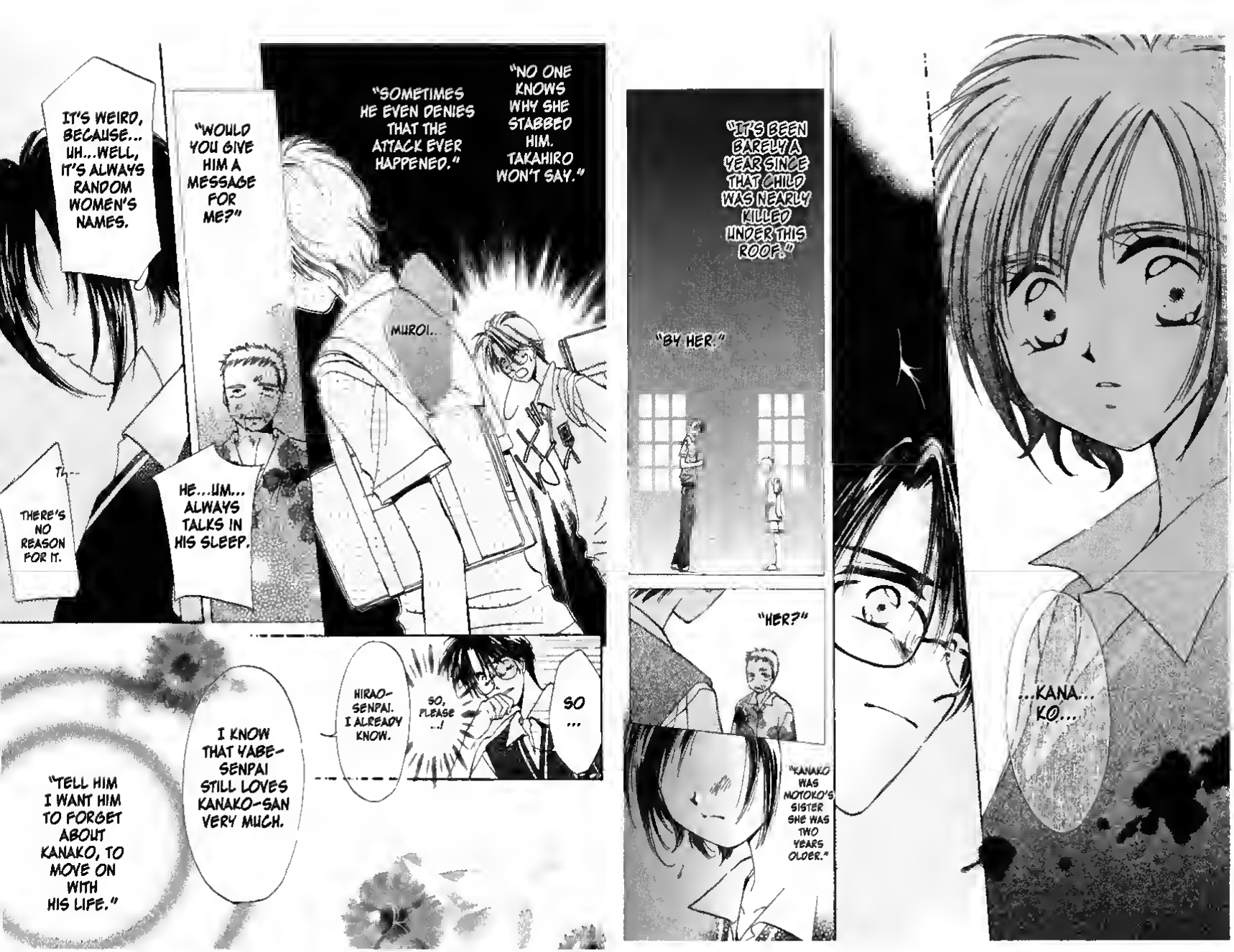
Please direct fan letters of love and adoration for Tachibana to:

Yutaka Tachibana
Hakusensha, *Melody* Editorial Department
2-2-2 Shinda Awaji-cho
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo-to 101-0063 JAPAN

Crap! I only got to do two movie recommendations this time!

BUT I DON'T WANNA! THIS IS SO UNFAIR!
WHAT'S NOT FAIR ABOUT IT?
YOU-!
BICKER
BICKER
MMMMMPH.
SO YOU WERE PLANNING SOMETHING SCANDALOUS!
BUT THIS WAS MY GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY!
DON'T WORRY. I'LL WAKE HIM UP AND HAUL HIM TO SCHOOL.
HMPH
last resort
YOU GO ON AHEAD, MUROI.
WHAT ?!
RATS!
If he'd been five seconds later...
What am I going to do with her ?
GRUMBLE GRUMBLE
I CAN'T TAKE MY EYES OFF HER FOR A SECOND.
He thought. She thought.
FREEZE
bathump
NNN ...
...KA... NA....
...KO...

...THE FAIRY TALE IN REVERSE.
MMM ...
MY SLEEPING BEAUTY NEEDS A KISS FROM HIS PRINCESS...
LOOM
I... UMM...
THERE WAS AN EYELASH ON HIS CHEEK, SO I BRUSHED IT OFF.
You got a problem with that?
WHAT EXACTLY ...
...DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING, YURI MUROI?
OH.
LIAR.
FOILED AGAIN!


"NO ONE KNOWS WHY SHE STABBED HIM. TAKAHIRO WON'T SAY."
"SOMETIMES HE EVEN DENIES THAT THE ATTACK EVER HAPPENED."
MUROI..
"WOULD YOU GIVE HIM A MESSAGE FOR ME?"
IT'S WEIRD, BECAUSE... UH...WELL, IT'S ALWAYS RANDOM WOMEN'S NAMES.
HE...UM... ALWAYS TALKS IN HIS SLEEP.
Th--
THERE'S NO REASON FOR IT.
"IT'S BEEN BARELY A YEAR SINCE THAT CHILD WAS NEARLY KILLED UNDER THIS ROOF."
"BY HER."
"HER?"
"KANAKO WAS MOTOKO'S SISTER SHE WAS TWO YEARS OLDER."
...KANA... KO...
SO ...
SO, PLEASE ...!
HIRAO-SENPAI. I ALREADY KNOW.
I KNOW THAT YABE-SENPAI STILL LOVES KANAKO-SAN VERY MUCH.
"TELL HIM I WANT HIM TO FORGET ABOUT KANAKO, TO MOVE ON WITH HIS LIFE."

MORNING
OW! MAN, I GOT A KINK IN MY NECK.
IT'S SAD... I'VE LOST TO A DEAD GIRL
LOST WHAT, YURI?
GOOD MORNING ... SENPAI.
NO...

"I KNOW HE LOVED HER MORE THAN HIS OWN LIFE, BUT..."
EVEN THOUGH...
...SHE'S DEAD.
"...SHE'LL NEVER RETURN HIS FEELINGS, NOT ANYMORE."

"...NO LONGER A PART OF OUR WORLD."
I DOUBT YOU DREAM OF ANYTHING ELSE.
...WILL ALWAYS LOVE HER, WON'T YOU?
YOU...
"SHE'S ..."

I ASSUMED YOU TWO WERE IN THE SAME CLASS.
WOBBLE
SORRY. LET ME TRY THIS AGAIN.
I'M STOPPED BEFORE I STARTED...
HA HA HA HA HA
WHAT? DON'T TELL ME YOU FINALLY WORKED UP THE GUTS TO ASK HER OUT?
WHAT'RE YOU GOING TO DO WHEN YOU SEE HER?
Hey!
Were you spying?! Where were you hiding?!
HOW IN THE WORLD DO YOU KNOW THAT?!
WELL, DUH SHE HEARD HER OBSESSION MUTTERING SOME OTHER GIRL'S NAME IN HIS SLEEP.
No.
SHE JUST LOOKED SAD EARLIER, SO I--
OH DON'T SAY? WHAT'S THE PLAN?
WELL, I... I THOUGHT I MIGHT... CHEER HER UP.
Where were you smuggling that?
RUSTLE

GRR
...BUT I KNOW WHAT HE SAID HAD TO HURT YOU.
NOW THIS IS SHOCKING. I DON'T OFTEN SEE YOU...
HANGING AROUND SOPHOMORE HOMEROOMS
YURI'S IN 1-B, THOUGH.
WHAT?
SHE'S NOT IN 1-A?
WE'D BETTER HURRY, OR WE'LL BE TARDY.
PLEASE, DON'T SMILE AT ME LIKE THAT.
YOU'RE FORCING YOURSELF TO BE CHIPPER, YURI...
Why don't you use the school's showers?
Can I shower first?
Oh, hey Didn't see you there, Hiro.

IT IS THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS.
...AND SHE'S THE ONE PERSON WHO WILL NOTICE.
YOU CAN HAVE GIVEN IT THE LEAST AMOUNT OF EFFORT POSSIBLE...
IT'S HER HEART.
IT'S DIFFERENT
IT'S MADE OF BETTER STUFF THAN PEOPLE LIKE ME OR KANAKO.
"KANAKO..."
SHE TAKES EVERY GESTURE AND TURNS IT INTO A POSITIVE.
"... MOTOKO'S SISTER. SHE WAS TWO YEARS OLDER."
KA-GURA-ZAKA ...

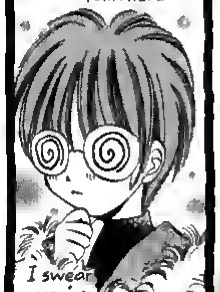
IT'LL BE OKAY.
Yuri loves cinnamon roll pastries
(Always does her homework.)
DO YOU MIND IF I TAG ALONG TO SEE YOU MAKE A MESS OF IT?
Hee hee hee
OF COURSE I MIND! YOU STAY AWAY FROM ME!
You suck so much
SHE'S GOOD LIKE THAT.
TRUST ME. YURI WILL BE THRILLED WITH WNATEVER YOU GIVE HER.
...WHY YOU...
Even though bribing someone with junk food is sorta lame.
PAIN WITH A STRAIGHT FACE
PERSONALLY, I'D MAKE TONS OF FUN OF YOU, BUT SHE'S NICER THAN ME.

Not that this really bothers me or anything, but some people have pointed out that my characters' names are often pretty ugly or strangely similar to those of other characters in my other comics. "You have no affection for your own creations!" they say.

(My Evil Assistant is especially fond of this!)

That's not true...I don't think so. No, wait, it isn't! Really! It's not that I have bad taste, or that I don't really care about names or using pretty kanji to make them. I think the main reason I give them bad names is because I'm stupid.

Sekine Tomoharu




Is it me, or was this FreeTalk kinda bland...?

YOU KNOW ME, I BOUNCE BACK QUICK.
BUT...
YOU'RE LOOKING A LOT BETTER THAN YOU DID EARLIER.
"...ONLY EVER LOVED ME."
"SHE... KANAKO..."
I'M SO CONFUSED.
...THERE ARE STILL SO MANY THINGS I DON'T KNOW...
WHOA!
DID THEY GET YOU AGAIN?
OR WAS IT...?
WHAT DID SHE MEAN BY THAT? SISTERLY LOVE?

STOMP STOMP STOMP
IT DID... BUT YOU KNOW, I'VE BEEN WRONG BEFORE.
"SHE'S A GOOD FRIEND WHO TRULY UNDERSTANDS YURI." ADMIT IT! IT CROSSED YOUR MIND!
I KNOW, I KNOW. YOU'RE THINKING, "SHE'S NOT SO BAD AFTER ALL."
GRR
Liar !!
Hey, I'm worried about Yuri too, you know
You black-hearted she-devil!
Stop following me!
FREEZE
WOW. IT'S REALLY GOOD...
...TO SEE SUCH GOOD FRIENDS.
I...
WHAT FRIENDS ?!
DO YOU HAVE A ROVING CLASS THIS PERIOD?
YEAH. I'M JUST HEADING BACK.

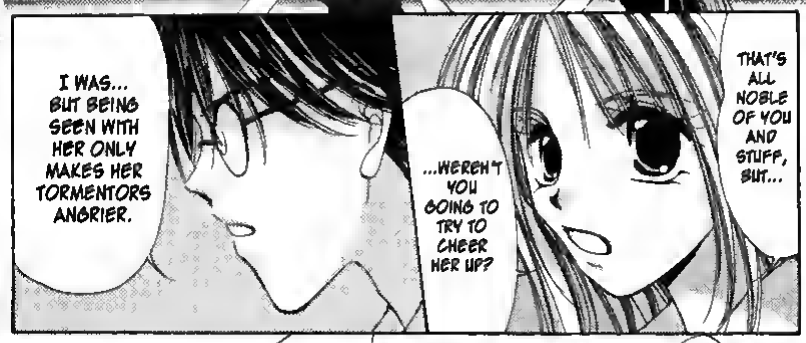
I...
I GOT USED TO THIS SORT OF THING A LONG TIME AGO. IT DOESN'T BOTHER ME.
Biology II
Study!
PRETTY SOON THEY'LL SEE THERE'S NOTHING GOING ON AND LEAVE ME ALONE.
No
THERE'S PLENTY GOING ON
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT.
YOU HAVEN'T DONE ANYTHING TO APOLOGIZE FOR, SENPAI.
EXTREMELY ASHAMED OF HIMSELF
I'M SO SORRY, MUROI.
HOLD UP...!
KUH
REALLY, I WILL..
I mean it
I'LL BE FINE.
WHAT HAVE I BEEN THINKING?
I WAS MAD AT YASE FOR BEING IGNORANT OF HER FEELINGS, BUT THIS WHOLE TIME I'VE BEEN IGNORANT OF THE PAIN I'VE BEEN CAUSING!
I used to get into fistfights with whack-job boyfriends
This is nothing!
Less than nothing
Yeah, she'll probably be okay
YURI-MUROI GIRL OF SIMPLE PLEASURES

MIGHT? YOU MEAN IT'S POSSIBLE SOMEONE SCRAPED YOU ON PURPOSE?
Moron
LIKE HELL IT WAS AN ACCIDENT! HOW MANY TIMES DOES THIS MAKE IT THAT YOU'VE BEEN HARASSED THIS MONTH?
Oh, those?
MAYBE...BUT YOU KNOW, IT MIGHT HAVE JUST BEEN AN ACCIDENT.
HM?
THOSE SCRAPES.
THEY WERE MESSING WITH YOU AGAIN, WEREN'T THEY?
"BECAUSE OF YOU, SHE'S MADE ENEMIES SHE'S NEVER EVEN MET."
...BEING HARASSED?
SHE'S...
I'M SORRY!
HUH?
YASE'S OLD GIRLFRIENDS AREN'T SO GREAT, EITHER
DON'T FREAK OUT. IT'S MORE THAN JUST YOUR FAN CLUB.
WOMEN ARE SCARY!
"THEY SEE HOW YOU LOOK AT HER, AND THEY'LL PUT HER THROUGH HELL FOR IT."
NO...
IT CAN'T BE...
"YOUR FANGIRLS DON'T CARE THAT THE TWO OF YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN ON A DATE."
JUMP

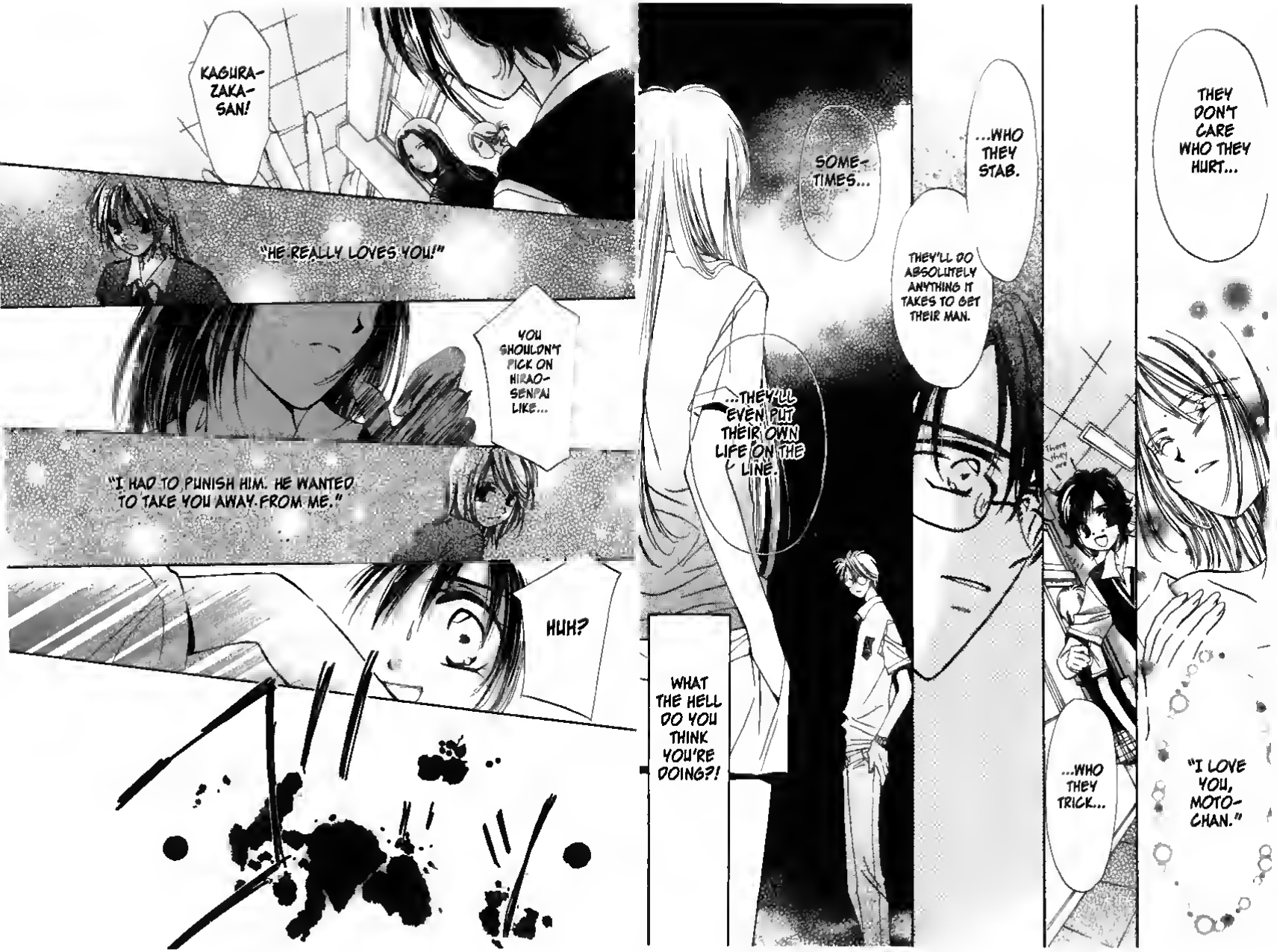
LOSER ?!
DID YOU JUST CALL ME A COWARD?
Or was I just hearing things?
HOW LUCKY FOR YOU THAT YOU FOUND YET ANOTHER EXCUSE TO AVOID TELLING YURI HOW YOU REALLY FEEL. SHE'S PRETTY GOOD AT TAKING CARE OF HERSELF, YOU KNOW. SHE DOESN'T NEED YOU.
WHAT WAS YOUR PLAN, GENIUS? YOU FIND ONE OF THE GIRLS THAT DID THIS AND BEAT HER SO BAD THE OTHERS WILL BE TOO SCARED TO KEEP IT UP?
Whaa-?!
OF COURSE NOT! I DON'T HIT WOMEN!
AND A LOSER!
YES! COWARD !

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT GIRLS IN LOVE.
RIGHT OR WRONG, THEY'LL DO ANYTHING.
AND THEY'LL BE FAR MORE STUBBORN ABOUT IT THAN ANY GUY!
WHAT?
I SAID I DON'T HIT WOMEN. BESIDES, VIOLENCE IS NEVER THE ANSWER...
WHICH IS EXACTLY WHY YOU'RE TOO SOFT TO PROTECT ANYONE.
Fighting is a crime.
WELL, THEN SHUT UP ABOUT THIS "PROTECTION" CRAP. IF YOU'RE NOT WILLING TO DRAW BLOOD, THAT PLAN IS USELESS!

...AND I'M GOING TO MAKE THEM STOP!
Nothing matters anymore. Everything is falling apart. Nothing makes sense anymore.
I'M GOING TO FIND WHO DID THAT TO YURI...
SLOW DOWN. WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?


I WAS... BUT BEING SEEN WITH HER ONLY MAKES HER TORMENTORS ANGRIER.
...WEREN'T YOU GOING TO TRY TO CHEER HER UP?
THAT'S ALL NOBLE OF YOU AND STUFF, BUT...

I COULDN'T LIVE WITH MYSELF IF I WAS THE REASON SHE KEPT COMING TO HARM.
YOU DON'T GET IT!
IF I STAY AWAY, I AM PROTECTING HER!
SO WHAT?
MAYBE IT'D BE BETTER IF IT WAS REAL FOR ONCE.
FREEZE
mutter
YOU COWARD.


THEY DON'T CARE WHO THEY HURT...
"I LOVE YOU, MOTO-CHAN."
...WHO THEY TRICK...
...WHO THEY STAB.
THEY'LL DO ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING IT TAKES TO GET THEIR MAN.
SOME-TIMES...
...THEY'LL EVEN PUT THEIR OWN LIFE ON THE LINE.
WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!
HUH?
"I HAD TO PUNISH HIM. HE WANTED TO TAKE YOU AWAY FROM ME."
YOU SHOULDN'T PICK ON HIRAO-SENPAI LIKE...
"HE REALLY LOVES YOU!"
KAGURA-ZAKA-SAN!

YURI!
EWWW, GROSS! HER NOSE IS BLEEDING!
YOU THERE! YOU TWO!
WHY--?
MAKES HER UGLIER THAN USUAL
Ha ha ha ha ha!
HUH?
"...WHETHER HE LIVES OR DIES."
I APOLOGIZE IN ADVANCE ...

WHAT?
OH, I'M SO SORRY.
MY HAND SLIPPED.
...
OWW.
Ah ha ha ha ha
SORRY. HONEST.
"I DON'T CARE ABOUT HIM..."

AAGk
I'LL LET YOU PICK.
IN THE FACE OR IN THE STOMACH?
WHICH DO YOU PREFER?
no
KAGURA-ZAKA-SAN?
Some body get the nurse!
He's so prissy around blood!
COUGH COUGH
HACK
WHEEZE
KA...

AAAAA!
WAH ...!
I'VE GOT THIS BAD TWITCH IN MY LEG...
EEEK!
...?!
What's up?
KAGURA-ZAKA!
STOP IT!

...WAS THE DAY SHE DIED. MOTOKO CAN NEVER FORGET IT.
THE FIRST TIME SHE HIT HER SISTER...
DIDN'T YOU KNOW?
HITTING OTHER GIRLS MAKES HER PHYSICALLY ILL.
LOOK HOW BAD SHE GETS JUST SEEING ANOTHER CHICK GET WHACKED.
BUT... WHY ...?

I'LL BE RIGHT BACK.
HIRAO-SENPAI ...
DASH
HUH?
N-NO ... D-DON'T ...
WHERE DO YOU WANNA TAKE YOUR PUNCHES? YOU WANNA PROTECT THAT PAINTED-ON FACE OR TAKE IT IN THAT ANOREXIC GUT? WHICH? CHOOSE! NOW!!!
AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH
HOLD IT! MURO! DON'T TRY TO...!
DON'T DO THIS, KAGUYA-ZAKA-SAN.
"I DON'T HIT WOMEN."
YOU ALSO TOLD ME THAT ONCE, REMEMBER?
SHE'S HESITATING.
DOES SHE EVEN FIGHT WITH GIRLS?
NO WAY.
SHE DOESN'T?

Yuri's making this really weird!
You'd think everybody must fall in love with something
WHAT I SHOULD HAVE DONE...
?!
...WAS KNOCK YOU UPSIDE YOUR HEAD RIGHT AT THE VERY BEGINNING..
AAH!
OHHH I-I'M SORRY

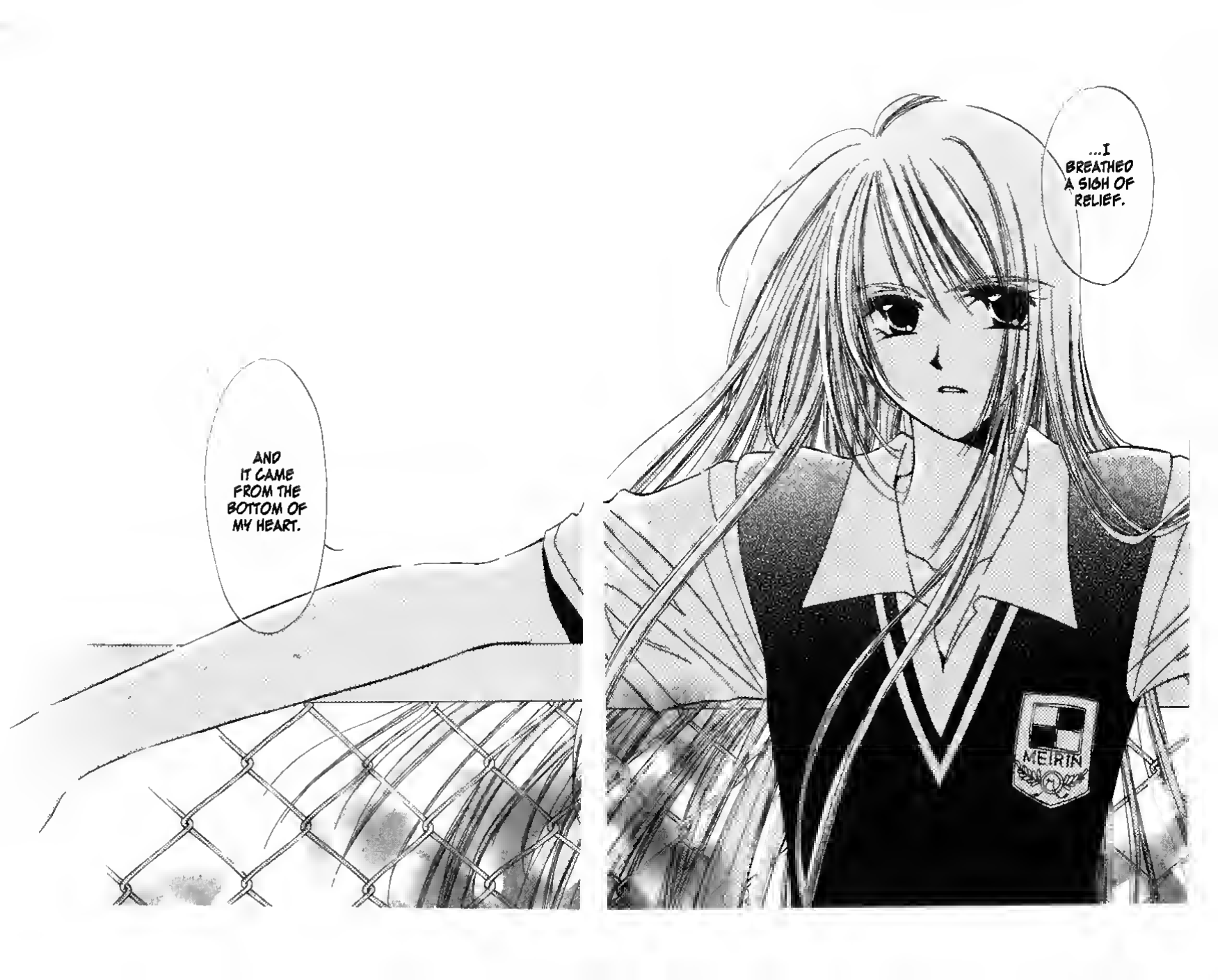
YURI! BUTT OUT! OR ELSE I'LL FLATTEN YOU RIGHT ALONG WITH HER!
BUT KAGURAZAKA-SAN, DOESN'T THAT DEFEAT THE POINT OF YOU STICKING UP FOR ME?
KAGURAZAKA-SAN, STEP BACK AND LET ME TALK TO HER. WE'LL SETTLE THIS.
My negotiator's been stopped.
CALM DOWN, EVERYONE. CALM DOWN.
CHILL OUT! JUST CHILL!!
You've brought shame to the entire school!
HOWEVER THIS IS SETTLED, YOUR CONDUCT WILL BE REPORTED TO BOTH YOUR TEACHERS AND YOUR PARENTS. ALSO, I WILL BE HOLDING A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE STUDENT COUNCIL TO DECIDE ON WHAT PUNISHMENT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE. WE HAVE ZERO TOLERANCE OF BULLIES!
HUH?!
I TAKE SOME RESPONSIBILITY. I SHOULD HAVE SETTLED THIS DAYS AGO.
Hirao's ticked!
Extremely ticked!
Uh-oh.
Don't flatter yourself
HMPH. I DON'T KNOW WHERE YOU GOT THE IDEA I WAS FIGHTING FOR YOU.
You're so stubborn!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, "TALK TO ME"?

YABE-SENPAI!
You look so cool today!
I'VE GOT TO GET IT TOGETHER ...
YURI...
YOU TOTALLY ROCK.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING PICKING FIGHTS, GIRL, IF YOU AREN'T READY TO SEE YOUR OWN BLOOD?
P-please
Dead body
N-NO MORE ...
A GIRL...
WELL, THAT'S THAT, THEN.
...CAN'T BE AFRAID TO PUT HER LIFE ON THE LINE FOR LOVE.
GAAH!
AN...
shake
shake
shake
... UPPER-CUT?
CLEARLY, YURI'S HAD MORE THAN A LITTLE FIGHT EXPERIENCE.
A BRAWLER?
YEAH, THE KID HAS MOVES.

UH-HUH. WAS THERE MORE TO IT?
Eee!
THERE, I SAID IT!
WELL, YOU KNOW SHE WAS THE ONE WHO STABBED YABE.
WHAT AM I DOING HERE?
I TOLD YOU ABOUT MY SISTER, KANAKO, RIGHT?
YABE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO STUCK WITH ME.
FRIENDS... CLASS-MATES... EVERYONE.
SHE WAS LIKE HIRAO'S GROUPIES IN THAT SHE DID REALLY NASTY THINGS TO ANYONE WHO TRIED TO GET CLOSE TO ME. SHE CHASED EVERYONE AWAY.
"IT'S JUST THE TWO OF US, MOTO-CHAN, ALONE AGAINST THE WORLD."
AT THAT MOMENT ...
SO, WHEN I HEARD THAT SHE HAD DIED, I'M ASHAMED TO SAY...
... INTO THE QUAGMIRE OF A SELFISH GIRL'S SELFISH WHIMS.
HER PATHOLOGICAL DEVOTION TO ME WAS LIKE QUICKSAND SUCKING HIM DOWN. .
POOR YABE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HE WAS GETTING INTO, AND HE LANDED RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE.

I TOLD YOU, I DIDN'T DO SQUAT FOR YOU TROLL!
I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO BREAK YOUR VOW NOT TO HIT GIRLS, THOUGH. NOT FOR LI'L OL' ME.
Besides, you 2 can take care of yourself.
...BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER. NOTHING CAN STOP ME FROM TELLING YURI MUROI I LOVE HER.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED WITH YABE A YEAR AGO...
THANKS A LOT FOR COMING TO MY DEFENSE, KAGURAZAKA-SAN.
I HOPE WE'LL BE FRIENDS FOREVER.


...I BREATHED A SIGH OF RELIEF.
AND IT CAME FROM THE BOTTOM OF MY HEART.
MEIRIN

...HM?
MY FAILURE IS UPSETTING.
...HIRAO... SENPAI?
MURO!...
BITE THE BULLET.
TELL HER!
I...I LOVE...
Y-YEAH...
I MEAN... I GUESS SO.
IF ONLY ...
...I COULD FIND THE WORDS TO BRING HER SOLACE.
IT... YOU...
YOU'VE NEVER HAD IT EASY, HAVE YOU?
YOU JUST WANT TO BE HAPPY, BUT SOMETHING ALWAYS MESSES IT UP FOR YOU.
I'M NOT THE KIND OF PERSON YOU THINK I AM.
...I GOT SO MAD AT MYSELF.
HAPPINESS IS ALL
...ANYONE I WANTS

# P.S
## TACHIBANA TELLS IT LIKE IT IS

WHAT WILL WE BE REVIEWING?
MEET WHO?
REVIEW WHAT?
What the hell for?
OKAY, EVERYONE! GATHER ROUND.
WE'RE HAVING A MEETING TO REVIEW.
SLEEPY ...
KAGURA-ZAKA-SAN, PLEASE REMAIN CALM, COOL, AND COLLEC--
YOU THERE! NO BACK TALK!
WELL, SOMEONE'S NOT HOLDING UP THEIR END OF THE BARGAIN.
WE DECIDED THAT GATCHA GACHA WAS GOING TO BE A ROMANTIC COMEDY
LAST TIME, WE ALL AGREED ON HIRAO'S IDEA, CORRECT?

I CAN'T STAND LEC-TURES!
Both giving 'em and hearing 'em
Girls prone to decking someone as soon as they are even slightly irritated naturally have no tolerance for speechifying
DOESN'T MATTER WHAT YOU SAY, SHE WON'T LISTEN.
GIVE IT UP, SHE'S WAY TOO SELF-CENTERED.
DON'T HAVE MUCH REACH, DO YOU, SHORTY?
I'll show you what happens to meanies like you! Take this! And this!
NEXT, MOTOKO!
HN?
IF YOU HAVE EVEN A SHRED OF HUMAN DECENCY, YOU SHOULD TRY TALKING THINGS OUT FIRST!
QUIT TRYING TO SOLVE EVERYTHING WITH VIOLENCE!
WHAT ARE YOU, AN ANIMAL?!
YOU SEEM TO BE ONLY CAPABLE OF THREE ACTIVITIES-- SLEEPING, FIGHTING, OR GETTING CHASED AWAY FROM SLEEPING OR FIGHTING.
And occasionally getting stabbed
NUH?
HAVE YOU EVER READ A SHOJO MANGA? DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THEY'RE ABOUT?
SPEAKING OF SELF-CENTERED, YOU DON'T HAVE ANY ROOM TO TALK, YABE.
Man, I'm tired
THERE'S NOTHING I HATE MORE THAN A GOODIE-TWO-SHOES PREACHING LOGIC AT ME!
Senpai, are you okay?
nerves frayed ↓ to shreds
I'M SURE YABE-SENPAI HAS HIS OWN REASONS FOR--
ST-
STOP! PLEASE!
DIE!

CAN YOU GUESS WHO?
FIRST OFF, YURI!
Y--
YESSIR!
IT'S EVERY SINGLE ONE OF YOU!!!
If you guys can't get your act together I'll re-cast this entire production!
HEROINES AREN'T SUPPOSED TO BE SO PUSHY!
YES, YOU'RE LIKELY THE TOUGHEST PERSON HERE, MENTALLY...
...BUT YOU NEED TO CURB THAT HABIT OF MOLESTING A GUY WHEN HE'S SLEEPING!
It's like you have some kind of sick compulsion
I-I-I THOUGHT I WAS JUST BEING... OPTIMISTIC ABOUT LOVE...
YEEEEP!

# Volume 3 is coming in just a few short months!

MY LOVE AFFAIR WITH SENPAI GETS ONE STEP CLOSER TO BEING A REALITY! WILL WE REALLY...?
WHAT REALLY HAPPENED BETWEEN YABE, MY SISTER, AND ME...?
Next volume, the relationships deepen! More of the truth behind the connections between Yobe, Motoko, and her sister is revealed!
THE REASON MOTOKO'S SISTER STABBED ME IS...?
WILL I GET ANOTHER CHANCE TO TELL MUROI EVERYTHING?

**Read the third collection of Gatcha Gacha to find out what happens next!**

With Yabe as the main character, of course

USING YABE'S OPINION FROM VOLUME 1...

## "GATCHA GACHA AND THE BLOND SAMURAI"

**A THRILLING SAMURAI ADVENTURE MANGA!**

The editors at TOKYOPOP have been looking for a good samurai piece, too...

**STAY TUNED FOR THE NEXT VOLUME!**

**P.S - Tackibana Tells It Like It Is / End**

LISTEN UP, YOU GUYS. IF YOU DON'T GET GATCHA GACHA BACK ON THE ROMANTIC-COMEDY TRACK, AND I MEAN NOW, I'LL COMPLETELY CHANGE BOTH THE STORY AND THE TITLE! YOU GET ME?
WHAT?!

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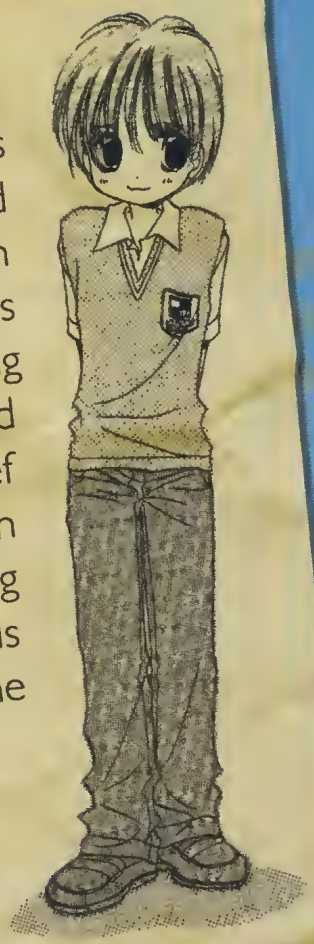
# Gatcha Gacha™

It's summer, and Yuri and Motoko have decided to go to the annual fireworks festival. But along the way, Yabe and Hirao join them. The casual conversation brings up touchy subjects: Motoko's heritage…Yabe's past…Hirao's growing feelings for Yuri…and how Hirao and Yabe first met. And just what mischief does Motoko have planned when she finds out Hirao has budding feelings for Yuri? The answer is right inside this next volume of *Gatcha Gacha!*



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